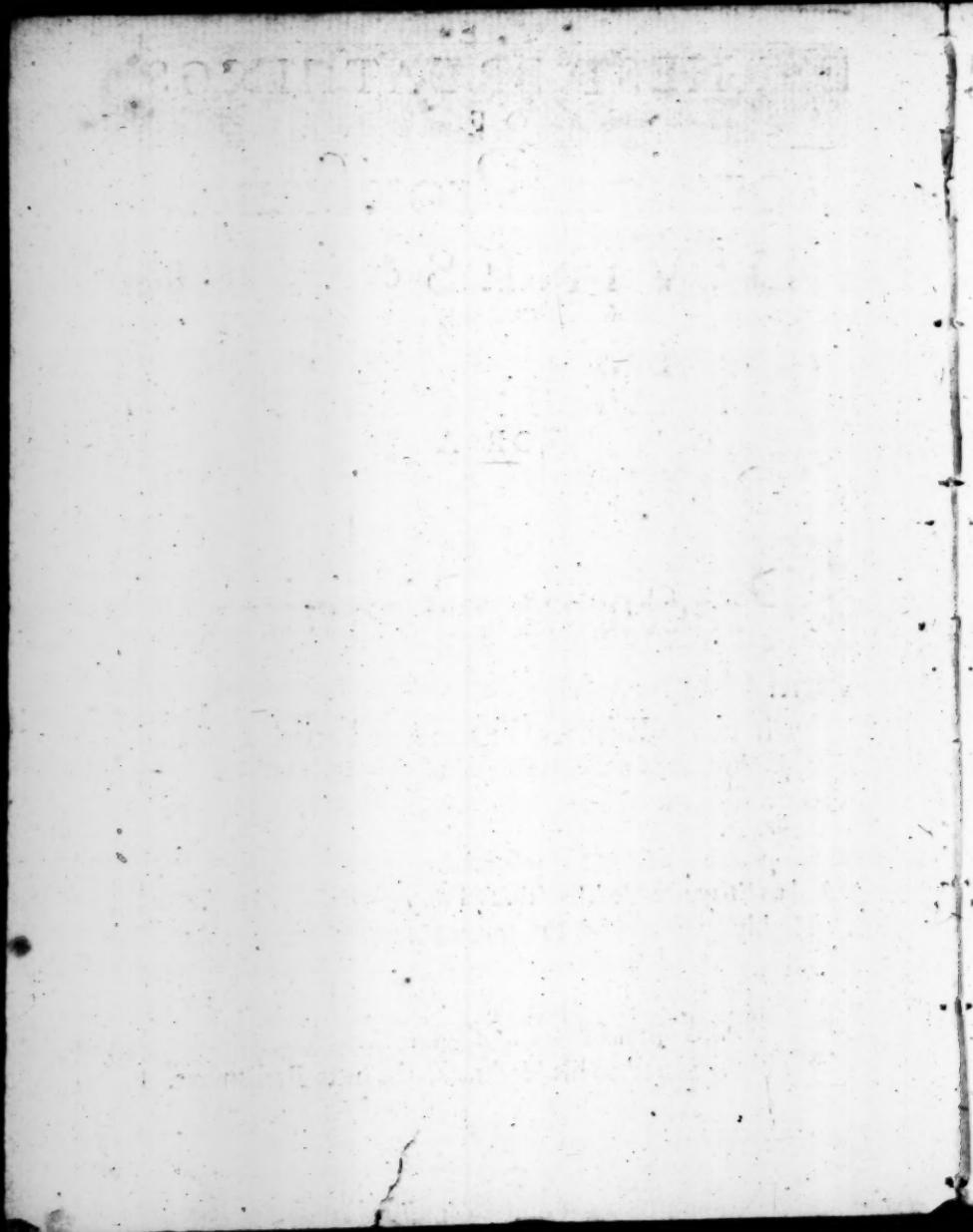


THE
EARNEST BREATHINGS
O F
Forreign Protestants,
DIVINES & Others:
TO THE
Ministers and other able Christians
of these three NATIONS,
FOR A
COMPLEAT BODY
O F
Practicall Divinity,

And CASES, wherein the Grace of God
hath more Eminently appeared amongst us
in these Islands, then in the rest of the World besides.
Which Work hath been long in the Heads and Hearts of
many Worthy Men to be undertaken, as appeareth by a Letter
written to Dr Usher, who much approved the same.
And an Essay of a Modell of the said Body of Divinity, by J. D.
Highly approved by Dr George Horne, Professor of the
University of L E Y D E N.

Together with an Expedient tendered for the entertainment of
Strangers, who are Protestants, and by their means to advance
the Gospel unto their several Nations and Quarters.

Humbly tendered to his Highness, the next Parliament,
and the good People of the Land.



To the
GODLY & LEARNED
Professors and Heads of Colledges
In the two Famous
UNIVERSITIES
OF THE
Commonwealth of England.



Efere ever this Request was made by Forrain Protestants to our Worthies in England, and when I was at the University of Cambridge many years ago, the Necessity of such a Work as is here implored, was made apparent unto me, and my misseis and earnest endeavours were made awake towards it; but then there was no appearance that ever any such thing could, or should be brought to passe: yet since we have seen greater and more unexpected matters accomplished, both in reference to Religion, and to the Civil Government, I hope we are in a fair way to see yet greater things brought forth, and things of Peace and Comfort to all the Churches, which may prove to be the foundations of many Generations. For as the hope of the Hypocrite shall perish, and be like unto the giving up of the ghost; so the desire of the Righteous shall be fulfilled, and he shall not be ashamed of his hopes, because the Promise is, that he who hungers and thirsts for Righteousnesse, shall be satisfied.

Now the Work which is here sued for by the Forrain Ministers, is nothing else but the knowledge of that way of Righteousnesse which God hath prepared for his Saints to walk in, that they may have Communion with him in his Kingdom. Therefore I am very confident that it will be so fully revealed and made known, that a man (as the Prophet saith) though a fool shall not erre therein. And because the Lord hath given unto you

The Preface.

your the accomplishment of their request; I think my self bound in Conscience at this seasonable time, to offer it to your pious thoughts, in the expresse words of their own Petition, and in some Considerations which I have annexed unto the matter thereof.

Therefore in the first place, you shall find here a Copy of their Petition in Latine, with the several subscriptions, whereof the Original writings are in my hand, which I have put in English to satisfie Vulgar Capacities: Then in the second place, you will find three considerable matters concerning this sute represteted unto you.

1. What is meant by a Body of Practical Divinity.
2. What the Reasons are, for which it ought to be published.
3. How the Work may be effected, and imparted unto those that have sued for it at our hands.

. Which having endeavoured to make you sensible of, as a Work most acceptable unto God, most suitable to the Gospel, most profitable unto the Godly, very usefull unto all, very honourable unto these our Churches, and not difficult in it self to be effected, if it receive but a little Countenance, I shall by the further prosecution thereof, as God shall give me addresses and opportunities, rest satisfied in this (whatever the successe and event may be) that I have not been wanting to the discharge of my duty, nor to the desires of the faithfull, so farre as God hath enabled me to proceed towards the accomplishing of the same. And thus commanding to the grace of God thy seale of this busynesse, I shall subscribe my self thy Servant therein



John Dury.

Eccle-

Ecclesiarum Magnae Britanniae atq; Hyberniæ patronis & Antistibus Primariis, Eximiis Dei servis, atq; Ecclesiæ Laborantis in Germania sautoribus Colendissimis, sit Gracia & Pax à Deo Patri, & Domino nostro Iesu Christo per Spiritus sancti Communionem,

A M E N.

Diversa Spiritus Dei dona membris Ecclesiæ diversis esse concessa, & sacra oracula testantur, & res ipsa loquuntur; finem tamen eundem communis & definitionis mutuæq; utilitatis iacet Patri lumen, dator omnis doni perfecti, propositum esse in omnium donorum largitione. Apostolus etiam dicit, Unicusq; datum esse Spiritus declarationem πρὸς τὸν μητέραν: & alibi jubemur, Ut quisq; accepit donum, ita aliis in alium illud subministraret, ut decet bonos gratias Dei diversæ exorbiens. Talentum enim quod a Deo singuli accepimus, fidei nostræ commissum est, ut illius dispensationes facti, non illud defodiamus, ut nequam ille servus, in terram; sed ad Domini emolumen impendamus, ut cum fidelibus ejus servis, plura tam Domino quam nobis ipsis lucifacere talenta possimus.

Hac cōspectant, Illustres, clarissimq; Viri, Reverendissimq; atq; Reverendi in Christo Paues & Fraues, ut cūm nobis certè innoverit inter Ecclesiæ magne Britannie, Doctrinam Theologie Practicæ multorum piè Doctorum Ecclesiæ vestre Antistitum publicis scriptis egregie excutiam esse, atq; ad usum Popularem insigniter accommodatam, atq; eam solūmodò lingue vestra Cancillis tanquam reconditum ab exterris Nationibus iesuorum contineri, & astringi, maximamq; utilitatem ad omnes Ecclesiæ Christianas, presertim autem Evangelicas redundauerat, si que vobis in hoc genere peculiares sunt, publicentur, id ut ab iis quoq; legi & intelligi possint, ut (inquam, cūm hac illa se habeant) Illustratibus atq; Reverentibus vestris votum nostrum ac desiderium aperiamus, atq; per sanctæ communionis in Christo viaculum, fraternaq; libertatis Parrhesiam rogemus, vos praesertim quoquot inter Ecclesiæ Redactores, Protectores, & Fautores eisæ edificationis Publicè verè studiose, ne permittatis hoc Talentum tam pretiosum ulterius abstendi & occulari ab Exoticorum manibus & oculis, sed velut pro prudentia vestra, pro servenis erga fratres Ecclesiæ Charitatibus, ac liberalis studiū erga Dei gloriam in Evangelii propagatione, pio zelo & affectu vestro rationem aliquam iure commendam, quā Medulla Authorum in illo genere apud vos extantum & eminentium ex omnibus collecta in volumen aliquod coniiciatur, sive Locorum Communianum, sive Systematis Theologie practicæ, quod publici juris sit, & omnium manibus teri possit lingua nostra & doctioribus communis: Audiri vix paucæ quedam in Belgicum sermonem esse translata, que magno usus sunt illis Ecclesiis & Theologis studiosis.

Nuper etiam inter nos Germanico idiomate editius libellus ex Anglico versus de Praxi Pictatis illa omnes afficit Piatiss Cultores, ut indè religioni que in pura modestiaq; veritatis castitatis professione consit, accessionem permagnam fieri constet. Idebq; sperare nobis licet, si huic nostro votu accedat per vos favor requiritur, ut facilè inter vestras (quibus ad hæc & similia beneficia Ecclesiæ sue præstanda præ aliis tranquillitatem in hisce turbis, & facultates concessisse videtur divina clementia) inveniantur aliqui, qui colligendis, transferendis, digerendis, acque euulgandis Authorum principis scriptis & meditationibus praticis non gravata suas impendant operas, suumq; talentum si id suadebitis; unde futurum confidimus, ut insigne Regnum Dei incrementum accipiat, si corpus absolutum talis doctrina existet ex vestris scriptoribus, ja quo tam in Theologia Tyrones studi-

sui, quam Ecclesiarum variis Pastores Concionum suarum materiam inventive possint, adificationem quilibet utiliorem quam illa est que hodie in scriptis Polemicis occurru: ut a studio contentiois ad Charitatis non factae affectus revocari poterunt multorum animi, ex quo tandem futurum sit, ut ad Denim imprimis gloria & gratiarum actio, ad Evangelii professores cum Sanctis & Pietatis studio, Pax & Concordia, ad Ecclesias publica edificatione, ad simpliciores pia Exultatio, ad prios afflictos, solidam Spiritus Consolatio; ad errantes & devios, salutaris Conversio; ad securas & carnales, vivida conscientiae exuscitatio; ad Hypocritas & obstinatos, clara perverstatis sue convictio; ad omnes etiam posteros, major lux veritatis perveniat; & ad illos denique qui suum in hoc studio Talenum collocabunt ad Regni Dei Promotionem, accedat illa vox quandam gloriofa & beata a Domino, qui rationem accepit Talenti conferat nobiscum, BENE est, SERVE bone & Fidelis, in exiguo usq[ue] fidelis, super multa te confutam: Ingredere in Gaudium Domini tui.

Quod gaudium omnibus iis quibus postulatum hoc nostrum patet, & gratumerit, cum omni corporali felicitate ex animo vovemus. Valete in Domino Viri Excellentes, atque omni honore nobis colendi. Dabantur Hanoviae 24. Febr. Anno 1633.

Joannis Daniel Wildius, Verbi Divin. Min. & Ecclesiaz Hanovice Inspector.

Theodorus Lenelius, Ecclesiaz Hanovice Minist.

Conradus Ammonius, Concionator Aulicus, ibid.

Paulus Toffanus, S.Theolog. D. & Senator Ecclesiastici in inferiori Palatiaatu Electorali Auctor.

Clemens Boësius, Ecclesiaz Gallice Neo-Hanovice Pastor.

Isaacus Boots, Pastor Ecclesiaz Flandrice, que Christo colligitur Hanoviae.

Mattheus Ruyer, Ecclesiaz Gallica Neo-Han. Pastor.

M. Philippus Pareus Davidis Filius, Illustris Gymnasi Hanoviensis Rector & Professor.

Besides these, who had a meeting in the City of Hanau (whereunto I was called at the time above written, purposely to offer this Petition unto me, and to engage me to follow it for them) others there were, who having been made acquainted with this desire of the forenamed Divines, did also joyn in the same suit by putting their hands to another Paper of the same Tenor at Herborn, and in some other places in March and April the same year 1633. Their names are these following:

Petrus Streithagen, Sereniss. Regis Bohemiae beatæ memorie Concionator. Aulicus.

Joh. Moriaen, V. Div. quondam apud ubios Min. subscripti Francfurt, 23 April 1633.

Philippus Suabelius, Hoing & Solmensis Ecclesiaz Patriæ Pastor.

Johan. Conradus Hopfius, V.D. Minist. in Comitatu Hanov. in Marchabel. Exul. Palatin.

Perutile hoc Propositionum & commune fratreum Germanorum votum, meā quoque subscriptione confirmare volui ego Henricus Meerbottius P.F. Pastor Stresbomi Ladenburgi chs, in Ele&t, Palatinatu.

Johan. Irslin, Theol. Doct. Scholze Herbornensis Rector & Professor, Ecclesiaz ejusdem Pastor, & Vicinarum Nassovicarum Inspector.

M^x Casparus Stippius, Ecclesiaz Siegenensis Archidiaconus; qui suo & reliquorum fratrum in Comitatu Nassovico Siegennensi, nomine subscriptus.

Johannes Arcularius, Ecclesiaz Beilsteensis Pastor, qui suo & reliquorum fratrum in Comitatu Nassovico Beilsteensi & Orzenzii subscriptus.

Thomas Derr, Pastor Altenkirchensis nomine Ecclesiarum Comitatus Sainensis.

This Letter in English speaks thus :

To the chief Patrons and Rulers of the Churches of Great Britaine
and Ireland, the eminent servants of God, and most respetted favourers
of the distressed Church in Germany, be Grace and Peace from God
the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, through the Communion
of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

Although it is attested by the Holy Oracles, and the thing it self doth speak it, that to the severall Members of the Church, severall gifts of Gods Spirit are bestowed; yet it is evident, that the Father of Lights, the giver of every perfect gift, doth in the distribution of all his gifts, propose unto himself but one and the same end, which is the common edification and mutual usefulness of all unto each other. For the Apostle saith, That the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every one to profit withall; and elsewhere we are commanded, As every one hath received the gift, even so to minister the same unto one another, as good Stewards of the manifold grace of God: For the Talent which every one of us have received of God, is committed to our trust, that we being made distributors thereof, should not hide it in the ground, as that unprofitable servant did, but employ it to the advantage of our Lord, that with such servants as are faithfull unto him we may gain more Taments, both to our Masters use, and to our selves.

These things, Illustrious and Renowned Gentlemen, Most Reverend and Reverenced Fathers and Brethren, are alledged, to the end that we may acquaint you with our wishes and desires, that seeing we are certainly informed, that in the Churches of Great Britaine, the Doctrine or Practicall Divinity, by the publique Writings of many godly wise Ministers of your Churches, is brought to a great perfection, and that it is excellently fitted for the use of the Common people, but yet kept up as an hidden Treasure from the eyes of Forrein Nations, within the bounds of your own language alone; and that a very great benefit would accrue unto all Christian Churches, and chiefly to those that professe the purity of the Gospel, if so be those things which are peculiar unto you were published, so as by them they might also be read and understood: Seing (we say) these things are so, our purpose is to acquaint your Honours and Worships with our wishes and desires; and by the bond of holy Communion in Christ, and with that confidence of speech which our brotherly freedom doth suggest, to intreat you (you chiefly who being Rulers, Protectors and Favourers of the Churches, and are truly desirous to edifie the publique) that ye would not suffer so precious a Talent to be hid and concealed any longer from the hands and eyes of Forreiners; but that ye would, according to the pious zeal and affection of fervent Charity which ye have toward your Brother-Churches, and the bountifull care which ye have for the Glory of God in the propagation of the Gospel, take some convenient course, by which the Marrow of these Authors, which in that kind are extant amongst you, and are of chief Note, may be gathered out of all into one Volume, either of Common places, or of a body, of Practicall Divinity, which may be published and made use of by all in a tongue known and common to the learned.

We have heard that some few things have been translated into the low Dutch language, which are of great use unto those Churches, and their Scholars of Divinity.

Of late also there is a little Book of the *Practise of Piety*, translated out of English into our Germane tongue, which hath taken so much with many godly souls, that we find thereby wroughts in them a very great growth of that Religious disposition, which doth consist in a pure and modest Profession of heavenly truth; for which cause we do hope, that if our wishes may obtain by your means the favour which is desired, that some of your Men (to whom God seemeth mercifully to have given in the midst of these troubles, both quietnesse and means to conferre these and such like benefits unto his Church) will easily be found, who without difficulty will at your perswasion, bestow their pains and their Talents, to Collect, to Translate, to Digest, and to publish the chief practical Writings and Meditations of your Authors. Whence we are confident this will come to passe, that the Kingdom of God will receive a notable enlargement, if a compleat Body of such Doctrine out of your Writers were put forth; wherein, as well the young Scholars of Divinity for their Studies, as many Pastors of the Churches for their Sermons, might find matter far more usefull unto edification, than that is, which now adiaies is mett withall in Controversial Writings. So that by this means, the minds of many men may be drawn back from the endeavours of strife, unto the affections of unfained Charity; whence afterward this will follow, that unto God in the first place, Glory and thanksgiving will redound; and then unto the Professors of the Gospel, with the care of holiness and piety, peace and concord; to the Churches, publicke Edification; to the simple sort, pious learning; to the godly and afflicted, sound spirituall comfort; to the erring, and such as go astray, saving Conversion; to such as are secure and carnall, a lively wakening of their Conscience; to the Hypocrites and stubborn sinners, a clear discovery of their perversenes; and to all the Generations to come, a greater light of truth will be advanced: and lastly, unto those that shall bestow their Talent towards this endeavour for the advancement of Gods Kingdom, when he shall call us to an account of the Talent which we have received from him, that glorious and blessed voyce shall then come from the Lord unto them, *Well done thou good and faithfull servant, thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee Ruler over many things; enter into the joy of thy Lord:* which joy we wish from our heart, together with all temporal happiness to all those to whom our request shall be made known, and with whom it shall find acceptance.

Farewell in the Lord excellent Gentlemen, whom with all respect we are bound to worship.

Given at Hanaw 24. Febr. Anno 1633. By

John Daniel Wildius, Minister of Gods Word, and Inspector of the Churches of Hanaw.

Theodorus Lenvelius, Preacher of the Church of Hanaw.

Conradus Ammonius, Preacher to the Court of the same place.

Paulus Toffanus, Doctor in Divinity, & an Assistor of the Ecclesiastical Senate in the lower Electoral Palatinat.

Clemens Boesius, Pastor of the French Church in New Hanaw.

Isaacus Boots, Pastor of the Flanders Church, which is gathered unto Christ in Hanaw.

Matthew Rowyer, Pastor of the French Church at New Hanaw.

M. Philippus Pareus, Son to David, Rector and Professor of the famous Colledge of Hanaw.

At Herborne in March, and elsewhere in April, in the same year 1633.
the same suit was renewed by these:

Petrus Streithagen, Preacher to the Court
of the most Illustrious King of Bohemia
of blessed Memory.

John Moriac, formerly Preacher of Gods
Word amongst those of Collen. I did
underwrite this at Francfurt, 23 April,
Anno 1633.

Philip Suabelius, of Hoing, in the County
of Solms, Preacher to his Native Church.

John Conradus Hopfins, Minister of the
Word of God in the County of Hanau

in Morsabel an exiled Palatin.

I Henry Merbottius, for the present time
Pastor of Scheßheim Ladenburg in the
Electoral Palatinat, am willing to con-
firm also with my Subscription, this
most profitable intention and common
with of our Brethren of Germany.

John Irin, Doctor of Divinity, Rector and
Professor of the School of Herbon, Pa-
stor of the Church of the same place,
and Inspector of the neighbouring
Churches of Nassaw.

M^r Capparus Stippius Arch-Deacon of the
Church of Siegen, who subscribed in his
own name, and in the name of the rest
of his Brethren, in the County of Sie-
gen in Nassaw.

John Arcularius, Pastor of the Church of
Beilstein, who subscribed in his own
name, and in the name of the rest of his
Brethren in the Counties of Beilstein &
Oren in Nassaw.

Thomas Dera, Pastor of Altenkirch, in the
name of the Churches of the County
of Sainen.

THIS Letter doth sufficiently speak for it self ; and the persons who did offer it, were in those parts none of the least considerable Protestants, nor is their number small, if you take notice of the Churches in whose name some have subscribed : and although the time since it was offered, may seem somewhat long, yet because that which hitherto could be done to obtain their desire, hath not been neglected, though by several invincible impediments obstructed, because the expectation of obtaining it, is not vanished, but at this time raised : and because such a suit as this can never be out of date till it be fulfilled ; nay although the first Petitioners should all be dead, it ought not the less conscientially to be regarded by those to whom it is made, because it doth not at all concern any temporal, or so much the particular conveni-
ence of those that make it, as the spiritual edification, and general benefit of all the
Churches of God, and of the ages to come in the Gospel. I say, because of all these
considerations, and more that might be added, therefore I am willing to second their
request, as I am many waies bound to do ; and to that effect, I shall first shew my
sense of the Body of Divinity, which I conceive will satisfie their demand ; and then
the Reasons why it ought to be, and manner how it may be made up.

Of the First.

What is meant by a Body of Practicall Divinity.



Y Practicall Divinity, is meant the revealed truths of God, concerning the obedience of the faith which is to be yielded unto his will.

There is a two-fold Divine Truth; the one is to be contemplated, which is the Object of the Understanding and Remembrance; the other is to be practised, which is the Object of the Will and Affections. The first, as we partake of it, is the Conformity of our Intellectuall faculty to the testimony of Gods Word, when we ^{2 Pet. 1.12. &c. 3.1.} conceive aright of his meaning therein. The second, as we partake of it, is the Conformity of the purposes of our heart, to that ^{1 John 1. 16.} which is known to be Gods will, when we prove how good, perfect and acceptable it is. That first, is in the Notions of the Mind to beget Knowledge: This other, is in the Conviction of the Conscience, to beget Resolutions and obediential Performance. Of the first sort of truth, Christ saith, *If ye continue in my word, ye shall know the truth, Joh. 8.31.32.* Of the second, he saith, *He that doth truth, cometh to the light, Joh.3.21.* So then as there is a contemplative and intelligible, so there is a Practicable truth, that is a truth to be done, which is the action of Virtue: for Christ in *Joh.3. v 20.21.* doth oppose the doing of evil, and the doing of truth; that is, Vice and Vertue to one another: He saith, *ev'ry one that doth evil (that is, who is vicious in his life) hateth the light; but he that doth truth, (that is, whose life is vertuous and upright) commeth to the light.* As darkness is to light, so truth is opposite to all falsehood; not only to that of ignorance and error, but especially to that of lying and deceitfulness, which are no less inseparable companions of vice, than sincerity and uprightness are of virtue in the souls of men.

Now both the Intellectuall and Practicable truth, is originally existent in the living word, as in the principle and fountain; and from thence by the testimony of Jesus, which is the Spirit of Prophecy in the Scriptures, it is derived unto us, as to a receptacle and vessel, when by it we are sanctified, according to Christ's Prayer, *Joh. 17. 17.* *Sanctifie them in thy truth, thy word is truth;* the Word preached by the Apostles and Prophets, is both exhorting and testifying; that is, both Practicable and Theoretical concerning that truth which in God is essential; but as it is manifested to us, it is the Grace of God which bringeth salvation, *Tit. 2. 11.* Hence it is, that nothing ought, or may be called Theology, but that which is taught by the Divine Oracles: *τὰ θεῖαν λόγια* can only furnish us with that knowledge which is true Theology; and whether it be in the Theoretical or Practicable matters, nothing is true Divinity, but that which is Divine truth; nor is any thing a Divine truth, but that which is manifested by the Word of God: the Word then to us, is the Standard of Truth.

Now although the Action of the understanding, must of necessity be Antecedent to all our Acts of truth, because the will is a knowing faculty, and cannot act orderly without the Understanding; yet the Theoretical truths notionally apprehended, bring

bring the soul to no perfection of happiness, except they become fruitfull in the actions of vertue. The Notional Science of all Gods truth, and of his whole will, as it may be in the brain alone, and without the practice whereunto that Science doth oblige the heart, is more hurtfull then profitable to our felicity; It had been better (saith Peter) *not to have known the way of righteousness, then after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment.* If ye know these things (saith Christ) happy are ye if ye do them: whence it followeth, that if ye do them not, you are not happy, although you know them. And the Apostle James, doth place the blessedness of a man in his Deed, as distinct from his bare knowledge, when he saith, *He that is not a bearer of the word only, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his Deed:* The happiness of his condition is made perfect in his Deed. Whence it is evident, that Practicall truths import us and reach our happiness more nearely then Theoreticall; because that which wee know, although it be a truth, is no part of our felicity, nor a true blessing of God unto us, except it either bring forth an enjoyment of the life of God in us, or else result from that enjoyment to us: for the substance of all our felicity unto all eternity, is nothing else but our union with God, which is the enjoyment of his life; and this life is only enjoyed then when by his truth he liveth in us, and we in him. His life in us, is spiritual light and power: Light is in the understanding; and power is to move conformably to Gods will in the whole inward Man: The Light sheweth him to us, the Power maketh us and him one; we may know him at a distance, but we cannot feel his life, and move in him, except he be in us, and we one with him. The knowledge therefore hath less of the enjoyment then the power of life but there is a two-fold knowledg of Gods truth; The one goeth before the enjoyment of his life, and the other followeth upon it. The knowledge which goeth before the enjoyment of Gods life, is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. *Joh. 3.9.* & this light is that whichever may be known of God, which he doth manifest in Men, and sheweth unto them: He doth manifest in Men, both that which doth make them clearly see his eternal power and God-head, so that they are without excuse; and that also which maketh them shew the work of *Rom. 1.19,20.* his Law written in their hearts. All this is manifested in them, and *Rom. 2.15.* shewed unto them, partly by the Creation of the World, partly by their own Conscience; but yet all this, and much more then this, revealed both *as* the Law given to the Jews, and in the Gospel, given both to Jews and Gentiles: I say, all this both naturall which is common, and supernaturall, which is specially revealed knowledge; nay although it might be in such a high degree, as to manifest all Mysteries unto them, may be frutlesse: and he that hath it without blessednes, and destitute of the life of God: for the truth which is both manifested in the natural mans heart, and shewed unto him by the Creation, is held up by him in unrighteousnes, *Rom. 1.18.* And although he doth know God, yet he glorifieth him not as God, *vers. 21.* And the Jews which had the form of knowledge in the Law, and could teach others, did not practise that which they taught; but by their transgression of the Law, they did dishonour God, *Rom. 2.21,22,23.* And the Gentiles to whom, together with the Jews, the light of the Gospel was and is revealed, shall be condemned because they loved darkness rather then light, *Joh. 3.19.* And he that may know all Mysteries, may yet want Charity, and be nothing as to the happiness and life of God. But although all this knowledge of Truth, which is Antecedent to the enjoyment of the life of God, may be void of the practise of Truth, and so come short of happiness; yet it may also, through the practise of Truth, become effectual unto happiness,

happiness, if God make it fruitfull, which he doth according to his own pleasure, in giving saving faith; whereby the heart is purified, that it may become obedient to all his will, by which means the soul partaketh of the life of God, and becomes truly happy: This knowledge then doth not otherwise make us happy, but as it bringeth us unto this estate.

As for the other knowledge of Gods Truth, which followeth upon our union with him; it is nothing else but a further confirmation of the soul, in the truth which it hath received unto life, and an enlargement thereof by the enjoyment of God in his power; for Christ doth give us two promises to that effect: The first is, that by the truth of obedience, we shall come to the clearing of doubt, concerning intellectual matters, for Job 7 v.17. *In faith, If any man will do the will of him that sent me, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.* And the second is, that upon the keeping of the Commandments, both the Father and the Sonne will manifest unto the soul which loveth them, their presence in love. For Christ saith, Job. 14.21,23. *He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest my love unto him: and if any man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* Here the manifestation of Gods presence, which is both the light and power of life unto the soul, is the consequent of the obedience of faith: and so it is in that of St. John, 1 Epist. Chap. 5.20. *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ; this is the true God and eternal life.* This is a reflexive knowledge from God upon our selves, in the enjoyment of him as our happiness; and so is that, 1 Job.3.14. *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.* So then we see, that all truth, as it is the object of contemplation, is nothing else but a Preparative to, or a consequent of the Truth, which is the object of Action. The Practical truth then is the main thing to be heeded, so to it the Theoretical is either subservient and subordinate, or a necessary and infallible effect. The Apostle maketh this evident by the nature of his Ministry, which Tit. 1.1. (he saith) *Is to be an Apostle according to the faith of Gods Elect, and the acknowledgment of the truth which is after Godliness:* Intimating clearly, that as his Apostleship was appointed by God to beget faith in the Elect, by their acknowledgment of the truth; so the acknowledgment of the truth and faith, is appointed to beget the life of Godliness in Believers. Therefore as the end and perfection of his Apostleship was the begetting of faith by the acknowledgment of the truth; nor was he warranted to teach or do any thing, which did not tend to that end and effect: So the end and perfection of all true knowledge, is the life of Godliness; nor is any knowledge in spirituall things warrantable, or any thing to be accounted a truth, which doth not tend to this end and effect. Godliness therefore, which is the practise of divine Truth, is the measure of all intellectuall truths; for whatsoever matter of knowledge is not proportionate, subordinate, and subservient unto the production of the life of God in the soul of a Beleever, is not to be received as a divine Truth; for the faith of Gods Elect, is in the acknowledgement of none other truth, but of that which is after Godliness.

From all which we shall inferre this Conclusion: That the study of Practical Divinity, is of farre greater concernment unto all, and far more to be heeded, esteemed, and entertained in the Schools of the Prophets, then the study of contemplative Mysterie and notions of Divinity; whereupon Controversial matters are ordinarily attendants.

tendants. And seeing there are so many bodies and Systems of Theoretical and Controversial matters, that it would be no easie task to any man to reckon them all up; and yet there is not so much as one compleat body or Systeme of Practical Divinity found in all the Churches; whereunto we see nevertheless, that all Theoretical Truths ought to be referred, & directed as to their end; it is evident that therein there is a manifest defect, and that much is wanting hereby, to the increase of publicke Edification, to the supply of spiritual Consolation, and to the settlement of a sound Reformation in all the Churches, which may be remedied by a Body of this nature.

Now by this which we call a Body of Divinity, is meant a full Collection, and an orderly disposition of all divine Truths which are after godliness, under several distinct heads and matter's; to the end that from the holy Scriptures, the man of God may be perfectly instructed, and throughly furnished with sufficient helps and directions, which by the Spirit of Faith, may not onely make him wise unto salvation, but able also to work all his works in God.

And concerning this Body; Seeing I am intrusted and conscientiously obliged, as in the presence of God, to sollicite the same towards those that are able to contribute their Talents to make it up; I conceive it may be an advantage to the Work, to offer up the parts thereof unto their consideration, that the number of tasks being distinguished and known, such as God shall inable and stir up to manifest his truth, and to joyn with others in completing this work, may know what tasks to chuse, and how to concurre with each other in elaborating the same.

I shall therefore with due respect unto better judgements, offer these following thoughts unto such as shall be undertakers in this Work.

First, I lay this Fundamental Rule to be observed in the contrivance of the whole, and of every part of the Work, viz. That the Number and Measure of the Parts of this Bodie should be made suitable and proportionate to the end thereof; that as nothing should be brought into it, which is not proper and useful to the attainment of the end, so nothing should be left out which may be requisite and subservient thereto.

We shall therefore look upon the end and use of the Work, that we may find the parts thereof without defect, and without superfluity.

The truth of Godliness, which is the Object of Practical Divinitie; is the manifestation of the life of God. The aime for which this Truth is to be attested unto the world, and practised by such as know and believe it; is that we may enjoy God by partaking of his life in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust, 2 Pet. 1.4.

This life of God in the divine nature, is communicable unto us by none other means, but by the knowledge of Christ, and the truth which is in him, Job. 34.6,7, 8,9, and 7. 3. Eph. 4.18,19,20,21. Colos. 3.10. and 2 Pet. 1.2,3.

And that which Christ doth communicate unto us of this life, is made perceptible unto us by two properties of Life wrought in us, the one is the Light, the other is the power of life: By the light of life, we are made wise unto salvation: and by the power of life, we are enabled to worke out our salvation, that is, to do all our works in God. This then is the compleat end of practical Divinity, to teach men the wisdome which is profitable unto the salvation of their souls, and the direction of the whole conversation to Gods will, that they may be enabled whatever they do, to do all in God by walking in his light: and what Doctrine soever doth not directly tend unto this end, is no part of this Body, and ought not to be mentioned in it, but whatsoe-
ver doth thus tend thereunto, ought not to be omitted.

To deliver then all, and neither more nor less, then all the Doctrines and truths which may directly be helpful to advance a man unto the attainment of this end; I conceive that this body of Divinity should be made up of two Generall parts. The first, containing the positive and undeniabe Truths. The second, the doubtful cases of Conscience concerning the practise of Godliness. That part which is positive, should contain concerning the life of Godliness, three things.

First, The Precognitions to prepare the mind to think of that life.

Secondly, The Principles by which that life is begotten.

Thirdly, The Parts or Acts, wherein that life doth consist.

By the Precognitions, I mean such truths as must be taken notice of, and acknowledged, or at least not contradicted and doubted of, before the Doctrine of Godliness can be taught, and without the acknowledgement of which, no man can be rationally dealt withall, or induced to intend to live unto God according to his revealed will.

By the Principles of the life of Godliness, I mean the Fundamentall Doctrines of divine Truth, which begetteth love unto God, and thereby obligeth the conscience unto all dutifulnesse of obedience towards him.

By the Parts and acts, wherein the life of Godliness doth consist, I mean all things which either substantially or circumstantially belong thereto to make it up, as the state of the Perfect man in God.

By the Substantials of this life, I mean two things. First, All truths which discover the inward frame and regeneration of the soul which liveth the life of God. Secondly, All truths which hold forth the outward frame; the way of walking and the work of the Profession which is proper to that life, and inseparable from the ends thereof.

By the Circumstantials of the life of Godliness, I understand all the different outward states and particular callings of Professors, wherein God doth set people in this life; as of Husband and Wife, Father and Child, Master and Servant; of Magistrate and Subject, of Pastor and flock, and such like; To all which severall duties belong, and thereunto several directions are accordingly to be given, to shew how every one should walk in all truth with a good Conscience before God and Man. In this discovery of truths we may find, concerning the Tree of life, as it were the soyl prepared before it be Planted, in the Precognitions; the Root, which is to be Planted in the Principles; the Stemme, when it is grown up in the Substantials; and the branches, after the full growth in the Circumstantials of the way of Godliness; so that in this Body of Divinity, the man of God should be compleated and set forth. First, As it were in his Head and Intellectuals, by the Recognitions and Principles. Secondly, In his heart and vital Motions, by the Substantials: And lastly, In his Limbs and outward Members, without which he is not a compleat man, by the Circumstantials of his life: and as none of these parts, or of the things necessary to make up the same should be wanting in this Body; so the matters belonging to each of these heads ought to be delivered fully, yet not superfluously; that is to say, so as they should not only contain the Marrow, but the flesh and full substance of all profitable truths; yet without needless Repetitions, large Amplifications, Rettorical Digressions and enlargements, which to move mens affections, rather then to convince their Conscience, and iulighten their understandings, are frequently used by writers of Practicall Matters.

And as these Generall parts of the whole Body ought thus to follow one another, in respect of their naturall dependance upon each other; so the matters subordinate unto every one of these, ought to be set in a method, which is positive and proper to their nature, that there may be a coherence of all the parcels in the whole, without any redundancy.

And

And although such a Body of truths fully and clearly delivered, might suffice to Men that are free from all prejudice and of able parts, to direct them in all Cases of Practice, which may be incident to the Course of their life; yet because the work is not to be compiled for them alone, but for others also; and because many doubts and scruples of Conscience are and will be raised, partly by the weakness of some, partly by the malice of others, which every ordinary capacity is not, and will not be able readily to resolve by it selfe, although it be helped with the undoubted Principles, with the standing Truths, and with the rules of practise, which such a compleat Bodie of Divinitie may containe: therefore to supply this defect of knowledge, (which although but accidental, yet is unavoidable) an appendix or Supplement of special doubts and cases of conscience (for I suppose the common doubts, viz. such as are incident to mere natural men, will be cleared by the Doctrine of the Body it self) should be added unto the Body in a method relating the order of Matters, delivered in each part where the ground of the decision of the doubtful case is to be found: And if this be done, I cannot see what could be desired, or further wished for in this kind; only to make this Appendix of case-Divinity compleat (because cases according to the differences of Mens capacities and apprehensions of matters, may be as to us innumerable,) therefore some general Rules before the particular cases be set down, should be given, to direct the wavering mind of what degree of proficiencies soever, how to order it self in seeking out by the testimonies of the Scripture, and the undoubted tenour of the Covenant within its own heart; a determination of any question whatsoever, at least so farre, that it should not be able to perplex the spirit with any unsettlement in the grounds of Faith, Hope, and Love, which are the Pillars of our whole profession in this life. For by the confidence of Faith, we stand and rest in respect of God; by the joyfulness of Hope, in respect of our selves; and by the sincerity of Love, in respect of our Neighbour; These general Directions then should first be delivered with an example, in a case or two, how to use them, & then the particular cases which have some difficulty more then ordinary should be brought in and resolved.

2 Cor. 1.24.
Heb. 3. 6.
1 Job. 3.14.
& Rom. 13.
8, 9.

Thus we have the many Heads of the whole; but this will not suffice for a distribution of particular Tasks, because each Head is too comprehensive; there must be a subdivision of every part by it self, into its parcels, set in order like unto the Anatomy or Sceloton of a mans body, wherein all the bones do hang one upon another; so that besides the number of parts, the talness of each part, & the place thereof in the body may be discerned: And although such a delineation as this of bare bones, will have no life in it, and be only like the rude draught of a Painter before he puts colours to his work; yet it may be not onely useful, but will be even necessary to make the features of the body appear, whch afterwards may have life put to it.

Concerning the Preconceptions.

God having made man a rational Creature, doth still rule him, and in all his wayes towards him, doth walk with him according to the grounds of that Reason which he at first gave him; and although through his defection from God (in whose light alone he could see light) by his own default and free choice of earthly-mindednes, he hath darkened the eye of his understanding, and made hi self blind both in the things which are supernatural, and also in very many things which are natural; so that in respect of thele he hath not any true Notions at all,

till they be renewed in him ; and in respect of these, the Notions which he hath, he cannot improve so, as to apply them by himself towards their right ends, without some special directory and help : yet it cannot be truly said, that God hath left Man, destitute of all light; and without all Testimony of the being of things supernatural, and of the right improvement of things natural; for he doth still maintain some general Principles and Instincts, as glimmerings of his truth within him, to the end that he may not only be without excuse in respect of his back-sliding, but that he may be made a subject capable of Grace through the second Adam, to be restored to his original integrity, when he shall be rationally dealt withal, both by the remainder of the light which he hath, and in that which is to be super-added therunto; for I shall freely acknowledge (yet without any advantage to Socinian Principles) that God doth oblige no man to entertain any thought, either of spiritual or natural things, or of his own dealings with man-kind in the one or the other way, which is contrary to sound Reason; but that every one who will either conceive of God rightly, or live unto him justly, is obliged to do it in a rational way, both in reference to God, and toward Men, because we are commanded to be ready to give a reason of the hope which is in us, to every one that asketh it of us, 1 Pet. 3. 15. and to present our body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, by our reasonable service, Rom. 12. 1. And although in this place λογικὴ ἀλησία may be rendered a service according to his Word, as λογικὸς ἀληστής, 1 Pet. 2. 2. is well rendred the sincere Milk of the Word ; yet because the Word of God did by Wisdom create all things at first, and still doth uphold all things as they were created, it must needs be rational in it self, and to all intellectual Creatures, the original cause of all Reason, because every Truth and Precept of duty revealed to man therein, is by the Scriptures rationally offered to the Conscience of those that are taught of God thereby ; and because they that are taught, are bound to take notice of the reasons why they believe and do every thing, so as to be able to give a rational account thereof unto other reasonable Men, therefore λογικὴ in the one, and λογικός in the other place, are to be understood in the fulnesse of their signification, as they comprehend both the Notions of Rationality, and of the Word of God, which indeed are inseparable ; for as it cannot be imagined, that Gods Word should have been separate from his Wisdom, so we ought to conceive, that his Wisdom and Will expressed in his Word concerning every thing, is that truth of being and reality of reason which is extant in it ; and that which in our mind is by any thing found a truth, and sound reason convincing our Conscience, is his Word by that thing towards us.

And this observation I have premised to that which I am about to offer, concerning the Precognitions of the life of Godliness; lest I might seem to desire without a just cause and sufficient motive, that which I shall propose as a task to the workmen to be compleated, before any thing else can be fruitfully and by a rational man (to whom our addresles must be made in this undertaking) convincingly entertained.

For before any mans understanding can be dealt withal, to induce him to live unto God according to his will, he must be brought to acknowledge that God is, and that the life of man may have some reference unto him by the knowledge of his will. Therefore these things before all others must be rationally made out unto him : and to this effect, four Heads of truth ought to be handled satisfactorily, which are these.

First, That there is a God.

Secondly, That God is to be feared, worshipped, and glorified by Man ; and that he is a rewarder of those that fear, worship and glorifie him.

Thirdly, That the Scriptures given to the Jewish Church of old by the Prophets, and

[8]
and to the Churches of the Gentiles and Jews by the Evangelists and Apostles, are undoubtedly Gods Word.

Fourthly, That the Scriptures were given by those Men, to teach all men the true way of fearing, worshipping and glorifying God.

Their truths ought to be cleared upon the ground of common Reason, which all men are supposed to be made capable of; and to this effect, I suppose it will be necessary to handle these following, or such like Positions.

Of the First,

That there is a God.

TO Demonstrate unto a Rational man that there is a God, he must be made to acknowledge these following truths.

1. That in this World, besides the things which are visible, there be other things invisible; which though concealed from sense, have a being, and may be understood to be.

2. That the Heavens, the Earth, and the things visible therein, have not their being from themselves, but from something else which is not seen, but may be understood to be over all, as the Governour and supream power thereof, which is called God.

3. That this supream power is before all things, without beginning and ending; infinite in all perfections, most wise, good and bountiful in giving all things unto all.

4. That amongst all visible things, as Man is the most perfect; so he can least of all have his Being from inferiour Creatures, or from himself: but having it from the supream cause, more remarkably then other Creatures, he is more enabled then they to know God and respect him.

Of the Second.

VVEN upon these grounds a man is Convicted that there is a God; then to demonstrate unto him rationally, that this God ought to be feared, worshipped, and glorified by Man-kind; these following, or such like Positions, are to be made out unto him.

1. That Man hath a soul endowed with a Reasoning facultie, whereby he is able to judge of his own actions, and know his own aims, though secret and hidden from others.

2. That in this judging facultie, there is something which universally in all ages Men have called Conscience, which secretly accuseth, or else excuseth Men concerning their actions and aims, chiefly when others judge of them otherwise then they meant them.

3. That this Conscience doth bear witness unto all men (in whom it is awake) from their own reason, that they are under the power of God, and that they ought to be thankful to God.

4. That the reason which convicteth mens Conscience that they are under God, will also convict them, that they ought to shew their thankfulness unto God, suitably unto the nature and properties of Gods being, and not otherwise.

5. That the nature and propertie of Gods being, seeing in all things it is the first and supream, is in it self infinitely perfect, and to all other things the alone Author

[9]

of all good ; and that therefore it ought to have the glory of this supremacie, perfection and goodness, given unto it by man in his use of all things.

6. That in case he doth not shew himselfe thankful, by respecting the glorie due to God in all things, he doth then deserve to be cast off by God ; and deprived of the fruit of his goodness in all things.

7. That if a man doth give unto God the glory which is due to his Name, by being thankfull unto him ; he may assure himselfe, that God, as he is wise and all-knowing, will take notice of him ; and as he is just and good, will be mercifull and beneficall unto him.

Of the Third.

Vhen a Man hath acknowledged these truths, that there is a God, and that he is to be glorified by Man answerably to the properties of his nature ; then we must rationally induce him to believe, that the Scriptures written to Jews and Gentiles, by the Prophets, Evangelists and Apostles, are the Word of God : And this may be done by the demonstration of these or the like Positions.

1. That no Books in the World have greater evidences and arguments of truth, in respect of their History, than these have : two things must be made out. 1. That they were written by those Men, by whom they are said to be written. 2. That the Matters of fact recorded in them, are as rationally credible, as any other humane Records whatsoever.

2. That the Writers of those Books (whatsoever they were) were undoubtedly the true servants of God, inspired by him in writing the same.

3. That all the Doctrines and Precepts of divine fear and worship contained therein, are most suitable to the nature and property of Gods Supremacy, Perfection and goodness ; and that they are more answerable unto the true Notions of duty written in the heart of Mankind towards God, than the Doctrines and Precepts of any other Book and Religion whatsoever extant any where in all the World.

Of the Fourth.

Vhen a Man is rationally Convicted, or at least induced to believe that there is no cause to contradict this truth, that the Scriptures are the Word of God ; it will be no difficult matter to let him see by the substance of the matters contained therein, and the ends for which they were written and given both to the Jews and Gentiles ; that they were written and given to no other end, but to teach all Men the true way of fearing, worshipping, and glorifying God : And to this effect, these or such like Positions may be made out.

1. That the whole summe and substance of the History of the Bible doth directly tend to this scope.

2. That the Authors of the Holy Scriptures, do expressly declare this to be the purpose of their writing.

3. That the naturall Properties and effects of the things taught by them, and their manner of teaching the same, are wholly fitted to work upon the spirits of men, those impressions and affections which lead them to feare, worship, and glorifie God.

To all which, this Position at last should be added,

That there shall be a time wherein God will judge men according to the works wherein they have, or have not feared, worshipped, and glorified God : which is to be

be made out upon three Grounds, which may be rationally evinced.

1. Because God having made all things under a Law, and Ruling all Men by a Law of Reason; must needs also be acknowledged as a Judge over the observers and transgrefors of his Laws, and consequently have a time to exercise his judgement.

2. That the rational Souls of Men are immortal, and live when they are separated from the bodie, and consequently can undergo a judgement after this life.

3. That the Consciences of Men bearing witness to them of their wicked deeds, even against their wills, though they live in outward prosperitie, put them in fear; and bearing witness also of the vertuous deeds of good Men, though they are in outward adversity, yet comfort and support them; which inward testimonies of the Consciences of Men are not vain notions, but undeniable Evidences of a Judgement to come, which the Soul within it self is sensible of.

When these things are thoroughly handled, and all Scruples which may be raised concerning the same are taken away, so that a Rational man, who is without prejudice, shall have no cause for want of the discovery of truths of this nature to make any further doubt thereof; I suppose the ground is prepared upon which the Fundamentals of Divine Faith, that is, the Doctrine of Revealed Truths (which by natural Reasoning no man can reach unto) may be offered. For as God doth make a man first by a living foul to be a natural man, and afterward he becomes by grace a new creature and spiritual man : so I suppose he doth *1 Cor. 15. 46.* cause the Truths of Rationality concerning himselfe, first to become effectual upon the conscience, before the understanding is obliged conscientially to entertain Revealed Truths. For he who is not capable of that measure of Faith which common Reason it self doth beget upon the natural apprehensions of God and his Truths written in the heart ; how can he be thought susceptible of the other measure which dependeth only upon Revelation and Divine Tradition? We conclude therefore, that these Precognitions are first to be handled as matters requisite, to fit the mind of a natural man to receive that which is to follow after, because I conceive, not that the Principles of the life of Godliness which are to follow, are to be delivered as the products of these fore-going Truths ; but only as matters subsequent unto the same, in respect of the order of things to be taught. These *Præcognita*, are *Præ-supponenda*, but not *Principia*, because I take a Principle of Godliness to be such a Truth, from which a Conclusion of divine faith and love may flow : But that cannot flow from any truth which is entertained upon mere natural Grounds, as I suppose, without spiritual Revelation and Illumination : for divine Faith, as it is the gift of God, and not the product of humane Reasoning ; so it must needs have a higher Principle than these Precognitions, namely some truth, as revealed immediately by God unto the Conscience to convince it, that he doth offer himselfe unto it to be a Saviour. And this is the reason, why I would have the Precognitions, and the Principles of Godliness distinguished ; namely, because they are truths of a different nature ; yet they are subordinate, but so, that the latter cannot follow the former, without some speciall work of God upon the mind.

concerning the Principles.

The Principles of the life of Godliness, are such Truths as set the mind upon the apprehension of supernatural Objects, and beget thereby the acts of divine Faith therein, which worketh through love in the whole Man ; all which is acceptable unto God.

Now all the Truths which beget divine Faith and Love, proceed from one Root, which is the Tenor of the Covenant, which God hath appointed to be offered from the Scriptures, by the Preaching of the Gospel in his name, to be believed and entertained by all: for all that God doth aime at in his dealing with Man-kind, next unto the manifestation of the glory of his goodness over all his Creatures, *Psal. 73. 24.* is chiefly this, to shew himselfe a Saviour, in uniting man by a Covenant *2 Tim. 4. 7.* of Grace unto himselfe, that he being guided by his Counsel, and having kept the faith therein, may afterward be received into glory.

The Covenant of Grace then is, the great and fundamental Principle of all the Principles of the life of Godliness: for as there is none other way appointed to unite man unto God, and restore us again from our fall to integrity, but this way of a Covenant: so there is nothing which we can do acceptably towards God, or profitably for our own salvation; but that which is done in order to the Tenor thereof. Whence followeth also, that all our knowledge is not otherwise useful, nor to be sought after upon any other ground, but as it leadeth to the observation of the Covenant; nor to be entertained for any other aime, but as it is subordinate unto the Tenor thereof: for as no man ever was, is, or can be saved, but he that is faithful in the Covenant of Grace with God; so no matter of knowledge can be saving to any man, but that which inableth him to keep the Tenor thereof. Hereunto then all truths, both Theoretical and Practical, are finally to be referred; and therefore in the Doctrine of the life of Godliness, the Covenant must be made the ground of all the principles of Faith, from which the duties of obedience must flow: And I am fully perswaded, both upon the grounds of sound reason, which a natural morall man is capable of; and upon the grounds of divine Testimony and spiritual experience, that all doubtful matters in Divinity, whether they concern the points of Knowledge, or of Practice, may not only be resolved by the right understanding of Gods aime towards us, and of our dutie towards him in the Covenant; but that the Resolutions thereof (of what kind soever) must be examined by, and applyed unto the Analogy of Faith concerning the Covenant, before ever they can bring true peace to the Conscience of any man; and therefore my advice shall be unto those who will undertake any part of this Work, that they keep alwayes the Covenant in their eye, as Marriners do the North point of the Compas, to steer their Course by it in all their Meditations; for it is mainly for want of this Directory, that both in our Notions and Actions concerning Religion, we run such wild courses: nor is it possible (as I conceive) ever to unite the Professors of Christianity to each other, to heale their Breaches and Divisions in Doctrine and Practice, and to make them live together as brethren in one Spirit ought to do, without the same sense of the Covenant, by which they may be made to perceive the termes upon which God doth unite all those that are his Children unto himselfe, and upon which every one that is in Covenant with God, is bound in Conscience, through love unto God, to maintain the unitie of the Spirit in the bond of peace with those that are his Children, who all alike, and by the same very way, are in Covenant with him.

The knowledge of the Covenant then, being the fundamental Principle, whereunto all other Truths are to be reduced, that they may be received unto the end for which they are revealed, we shall endeavour to shew what the Doctrines of divine Faith are, which are subordinate thereunto; and which by vertue of that subordination, are able to beget love towards God in a believing soul; for no doctrine of Faith doth otherwise oblige any man to love and obedience towards God, then as it is revealed to manifest Gods love unto us, as he is become our Saviour, and to make us faithfull towards him in the Covenant.

I conceive then, that all the Doctrines of divine Faith, tend either to the erecting and settling of the Covenant of Grace with us, or to the confirmation of our Faith in the truth thereof.

To Erect and settle the Covenant with us, we must needs know, 1. The true Instrument of the Covenant wherein it is revealed. 2. The things belonging to the true Tenor thereof, as they are offered to us in that Instrument. 3. The Motives for which we should embrace and entertaine the same: for if any of these three points be wanting, we cannot be found in the observation thereof.

Concerning the true Instrument of the Covenant, we believe the same to be the Canonical Scriptures; whereof two things must be known: First, What the proper Character of Canonical Scripture is. Secondly, How the truth of God for the knowledge of the Covenant, is therein offered unto us.

Concerning the first; this is to be believed,

That no Books are to be accounted Canonical Scripture, that is, the Word of God revealing his Covenant to Mankind; but such as are written in the Hebrew Tongue, and were given to the Jewish Church to be a Rule of their profession in order to the Covenant; or were written in the Greek tongue, and were given to the first Churches of Christianitie, as well Jews as Gentiles for the same end.

Concerning the second; this is to be believed,

That these Books offer the Covenant unto our Consideration, and all divine Truths belonging to the knowledge thereof, with infallible and uncontrollable authority, most perfectly and very clearly, to such as have an upright desire to know it.

And concerning these three Matters of Infallibility, Perfection and Evidence, which we believe to be in the Scripture, this is further more distinctly to be believed,

1. Concerning the infallibility of the Scripture, we believe that the truth of God revealed in the Canonical Scriptures, is so highly and uncontrollably credible, that no man, no not an Apostle himself, nor an Angel from Heaven is to be believed, who should contradict the same: but all Men, Churches, Councils, Fathers, Schools, and their Writings, Sayings, Actions, and Thoughts concerning divine Matters, are to be examined thereby, as by the only rule of truth and righteousness, and if they agree not therewith, they are to be rejected.

2. Concerning the perfection of the Canon we believe; That the Word of God revealed therein, is so compleat, both for the matter and manner of expression, that neither any thing unprofitable is therein delivered; nor any thing profitable or needful to be known, therein omitted; but all things of Doctrine and Reproof, of Correction and Instruction in Righteousnes and for Comfort, whether to be believed or hoped for, or to be done or left undone unto salvation, are more then sufficiently laid open, and prescribed in a form of sound words, which ought not to be altered; so that all heathenish Philosophie in Divine matters, and all humane Traditions, and will-worship in the service of God, are to be utterly rejected: nor is it lawful for any to conceive, that they can speak of matters of Faith more exactly and properly, in respect of the things themselves; or more conveniently and fitly, in respect of the Capacities of men, then the Holy Ghost hath done in those Writings.

3. Concerning their clearness this is to be believed;

That the word of God revealed therein, is so evident and easie to be understood, that the meanest Capacities of those that are come to the years of discretion, if they be godly and desirous to do Gods will, searching the Scriptures diligently, may without difficulty comprehend all things necessary to be knowna unto salvation; so that none

L 43

none ought, by reason of any supposed darkness to be therein, to abstain from reading
the Scriptures, which is a duty most suitable and necessary to all.

Of the things belonging to the Tenour of the covenant.

Concerning the Tenour of the Covenant, as it is revealed in the Canonical Scriptures, three things must be opened.

First, Who the Parties are, which are concerned therein, and what their Relation is to one another.

Secondly, What the form of the contract is, according to which the Covenant is made with those that are concerned therein.

Thirdly, What the way is, by which it is established amongst men, that they may embrace it, and have the benefit thereof.

Of the parties.

The Parties concerned in the Covenant, are, God and Man, at a distance by reason of sin; and Jesus Christ the Mediator of God and man, who reconcileth them by his satisfaction and righteousness.

Of God.

God is to be taken notice of, as he hath revealed himself in his Word, to be the Saviour, and our God by a Covenant; so that nothing is either necessary or profitable to be known of him further than what serves for this end; and to this effect, he hath revealed himself in his Being, in his Will, and in his Works.

His Being is revealed in the Properties of his nature, and the subsistence thereof which we call Personalities.

The Properties of his Nature, are revealed to shew what he is, and who he is.

The Properties shewing what he is, *That he is a Spirit living of himself*, Joh. 4.24. and 5.26.

The Properties shewing who he is, are these,

That he is the only true God alone; in Being infinite, eternal, incomprehensible, every where present, simple, unchangeable, all-knowing, all wise, all-free, all-just, all-holy, all-mighty, all-happy, all-good, all-true, all-faithfull, and full of all mercy and compassion.

His subsistence is in three, who bear witness in Heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one and the same God, 1 Joh. 5.7. The Father unbegotten; the Son only begotten; and the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son.

His Will is revealed in the properties of his Counsels which are wise, good, free and established for ever.

His Works are revealed in the Creation, Preservation and Government of the World, and especially of Mankind therein, over whom he delighteth to exercise Loving kindness, Judgement and Righteousness in the Earth, for his own Glory, and according to the tenour of the Covenant.

Of Man.

Man is to be taken notice of as he is spoken of in the Word, to be of God, to belong unto God, and obliged to depend upon God by a Covenant in his Three-fold state. 1. In the state of Innocencie. 2. In the state of Guilt and Misery. 3. In the state of Grace and Reconciliation unto God.

Of the Mediator Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ the Mediator of the new Covenant between God and Man, is revealed in the Word to relate unto both, 1. In respect of his two-fold Nature in one person, 2. In respect of his threefold Office, of Prophet, Priest, and King, whereunto he was anointed, 3. In respect of the performance of all Duties belonging to those Offices in his two-fold state, the one of Humiliation by his life and death on earth, the other of exaltation by his power and glory in heaven.

In all which, as the fitness which is in Christs Person, Natures and offices, to work out redemption for us, and to settle the Covenant of Grace between God and us, is to be taken notice of, so the Work, First of Reconciliation between God and us, as this was effected according to the purpose of God in the Covenant: Secondly, Of the Restitution of our nature to a state of Union and Communion with God, as this doth enable us to observe the Covenant on our part: and Thirdly, Of Christs Mediation and Intercession in heaven for us, as he doth continue us in that state of Grace which is the effect of the Covenant, is also to be acknowledged; that not only the Relation which is between God and us in Christ, may be believed; but the Tenor of the Covenant, as it is offered to us in the Word by him, may be embraced.

Of the Form of the Contract.

IN the form of the contract, two Things must be acknowledged. 1. With whom the contract is made properly and directly, and with whom indirectly. 2. What the terms of the agreement are, by which it is made with each of them.

The contract of the Covenant, is properly and directly made only with Christ Jesus; and indirectly with those that believe in him, and make profession of his name; for Christ is given as the Covenant of God unto them, *Isai. 42.6. and 49.8.* and they are received only for his sake, and not for any thing in themselves.

The Termes of the Agreement by which the Covenant is made with Christ, are these: That whosoever shall be redeemed by him, and be found in him, *not having their own righteousness, but the righteousness of God* *Isai.59.21.* through faith, to be made conformable unto the image of the Son of God, *shall become Children of God, and Heirs of eternal glory,* Rom.3.24. *Justified freely by his Grace through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ,* Phil.3.9. *be found in him,* &c. Rom 8.29. *Predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son,* Rom.5.per that he might be the first born amongst many Brethren, Joh.1.12. *He totum.* gave them power to become the Sons of God; and Joh.6.39. *I should lose nothing of all which he hath given me, but raise it up again at the last day.*

The terms of the Agreement by which the Covenant is made in Christ with the Believers, are; That God will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and remember their iniquities no more; that he will write his laws in their hearts, and put them in their minds: that he will be to them a God, and they shall be to him a People; and that they shall all be taught of God from the least unto the greatest. Heb.8.10,11,12. The terms of the agreement by which the Covenant is made in Christ, with those that make profession of his Name, are, That every one who nameth the name of Christ, should depart from iniquity, 2 Tim.2.19. That such as separate themselves unto the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, shall be received by him; that he will dwell amongst them, and walk in them, and be their God, and they shall be his people; that he will be a Father unto them,

them, and they shall be his Sons and Daughters, 2 Cor.6.16,17,18. And that every one who doth suffer with Christ, shall also reign with him, 2 Tim.2.12. Rom.8.17.

Hitherto we have mentioned the heads of matters, which shew what the Tenor of the Covenant is: now follow those things which shew the way, how amongst men it is established, that they may embrace it, and have the benefit of it.

Of the establishment of the Contract with Men for Christ's sake.

THAT this contract might be ratified and inalterably confirmed, to the benefit of Man-kind, Jesus Christ died, and made these promises his Testament unto those that believe and make profession of his Name; and rising again from the Dead by the power of his God head, he is gone into heaven to administer from thence this Testament unto these unto whom he did bequeath it.

To this effect the Gospel was preached, and is to be published unto the end of the World, by the gifts of the holy Ghost which Christ did send down, and will send down from heaven upon Men: for this is a part of the Covenant which the Father hath made with those that are in Christ for his sake, that his Spirit which is upon Christ, and his Words which he did put in his mouth, shall not depart out of his mouth, nor out of the mouth of his Seed, nor out of the mouth of his Seeds Seed, from henceforth and for ever; *Isai.59.20.21.*

In this Administration of the Testament for the establishment of the Covenant, two things are to be acknowledged.

1. What the general offer of Grace is on Gods part, calling all men to Christ to partake of the Covenant.

2. How the particular Terms of the contract are made good with Believers, and with the Professors of Christ's name.

Of the general offer of Grace.

IN the general Call of all Men unto Grace, three things are to be acknowledged.

1. What state they are in who are called unto Christ. 2. What they are called unto in him. 3. By what way they come to him.

Concerning the first, we believe; That God hath appointed the Gospel to be preached to Men dead in sins and trespasses, who have no abilitie of themselves at all to will any thing which is spiritually good; far less to convert themselves, or to prepare themselves thereunto.

Concerning the second, we believe; That they are called to receive the pardon of their sins, rest and ease to their souls, and the light of life, according to that of Christ and the Apostles, *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden; and I will give you rest, Mat.11.28.* And be it known unto you, that through this Man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses, *Act.13.38.39.* And awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light, *Ephc.5.14.* And he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life, *John 3.12.*

Concerning the third, we believe, that the way by which Men come to Christ and follow him, is Repentance from dead Works, and Faith towards God, according to that of Christ and his Apostles, *The Kingdom of God is at hand: Repent ye, and believe*

*ieve the Gospel, Mar. 1.15. Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, re-
pentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, Act. 20.21.*

How the particular Terms of the Covenant are made good to Believers.

IN the Particular Call of Believers, three things should be acknowledged, 1. How they are made to believe and entertain the offer of the Covenant. 2. How God doth make good the Tenour of his Covenant in Christ towards them. 3. How they are made sensible of their happy condition in Grace, to apprehend their right to Glory.

Concerning the first, we believe, that such as hear the Word, and are moved to answer the Call given them therein, and to embrace effectually the Promises of the Covenant through the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, are moved and enabled so to do by a free and special grace of God conferred upon them, who of his own good pleasure doth work in them by the gift of Faith, both to will their conversion, and to perform the same, so that they are brought Free-willingly unto Christ, and desire above all things to be found in him to partake of the merits of his death.

Concerning the Second, We believe that God doth make good unto all such as by Faith are found in Christ, the Tenour of his Covenant, when by his grace they are justified and adopted to be his children, and sanctified by the Spirit of regeneration, whereby they are also sealed unto the day of their final Redemption, and enabled to walk and persevere in the obedience of Faith and in the enjoyment of grace unto the end.

Concerning the Third, We believe that all true Believers may have a comfortable assurance of their blessed estate in grace, by the testimony of the Spirit of Adoption unto their conscience, given them in the sincerity of their walking with God in the Covenant, according to that which the Apostle saith, Rom. 8.15,16. *The Spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba Father, the Spirit it self beareth witness with our spirit that we are the Children of God: and Cor. 1.12. Our rejoicing is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity by the grace of God we have had our conversation in the world.*

How the Particular Terms of the Covenant are made good to Professors.

IN the particular Call of Professors to entertain professedly the duties, and therein to receive the Graces of the Covenant, Two things are to be acknowledged, wherein the Communion of Saints do consist.

First, That such as profess the name of Jesus Christ are to be gathered together, and bound to joyn themselves in one body as members one of another in Christ.

Secondly, That they are to be perfected and built up by the work of the Ministry, towards the effect of the Covenant.

Concerning The gathering of Professors together into one Body.

First, We believe that to effect this, the Lord hath given gifts unto men; At first Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists, to lay the foundation of his Church, and now Pastors and Teachers to build thereupon, who have continued and shall continue by a lawfull Ordinary Calling unto the End of the World.

Secondly, We believe also that the gathering together of Professors into one body, is lawfully performed, when they professedly give up themselves unto God through the Ministry of the Testament which Christ hath instituted, and by their professed subjection,

subjecting of themselves to all the Ordinances of Gods house , which make the Believers as one in the Covenant with God , so one with each other before the World in the profession thereof to Gods glory.

Concerning the perfecting and building up of the Professors as one man, till they come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ in the Covenant. We believe that the Lord hath appointed severall administrations of the gifts of his Spirit to be used amongst them in the household of Faith , some relating principally to the inward man, and some to the outward man ; and all to be performed as the services of Love in the communion of Saints.

The administration of gifts relating principally to the inward man, is in the duties of publick worship, whereunto Professors are obliged to apply themselves by attending to the word of Prophecie, and by joyning in the ordinary Sacrifices of Prayers and Praises to be offered up unto God in his house, and in the extraordinary and lawfull use of an Oath and of a Lot, wherein Gods presence is to be attested and petitioned, when necessary matters cannot otherwise be determined.

The administration of gifts relating principally to the outward man, is in the duties of Love belonging to the communion of Saints, wherein Professors are obliged to watch over one another, observing each others conversation, and to supply each others wants in all things. And although in some respect, all are bound alike to administer their gifts to each other by themselves, yet We believe that the Eldership is more especially bound to over-see the wayes of their Flocks , and to make use of the Keyes of the kingdom of heaven towards them , to open and shut the dore of comfort unto them as they shall find cause : and that the Deaconship is more particularly obliged to consider the bodily necessities of the Saints, and to distribute the Contributions of Professors to such as stand in need thereof.

Hitherto, We have spoken of the wayes by which the Covenant is establisht : that is to say, whereby God doth offer it, the Elect do embrace it, and the Professors do entertain it before the World. Now followeth the Reason wherefore all men are bound thus to entertain it and keep it.

Of the Third.

Wherefore all men are bound to entertain the Offer, and keep the Tenor of the Covenant.

THe Ground and Motive wherefore all men should receive the Offer, and observe the Tenor of the Covenant which God doth make with them, is Two-fold.

First , because God hath now commanded all men every where to Repent , and believe the Gospel . *Act. 17. 30. Luk. 24. 57.*

Secondly , because God hath appointed a Day wherein the Dead shall be raised, and the World judged in righteousness by the man Jesus Christ (*Act. 17. 31.*) who will receive none into Glory, but such as have kept his Covenant by Repentance and Faith, and by making profession thereof before the World.

Hitherto, We have mentioned the fundamental Heads of Faith which concern the Revealing and the establishing of the Covenant. Now followeth that which concerneth the confirmation of the same.

Matters of Truth so be Known to confirm us in the Covenant.

Concerning the confirmation of the Covenant, two things are to be acknowledged.

First,

First, What God on his part doth offer to assure us of the truth of his meaning and the Reality of his purpose in the Covenant,

Secondly, What the Believers on their part are bound to do in accepting that which God doth offer for their confirmation in the promises of the Covenant.

Concerning the First, We believe,

First, That God hath given unto such as he hath received into his Covenant, certain Signs to represent the Reality of his Purpose, to confirm the things promised in the Word, and to conveyg the assurance thereof unto them thereby, as badges of his special Love to them in the Profession.

Secondly, We believe further, That these Signes are appointed for three several uses in the house of God :

First, for the Reception of Professors into Gods house, to oblige them to entertain the Covenant professedly ; and to this effect, Baptism is appointed.

Secondly, for the maintenance and continuance of Professors in the unity of the Covenant with God, and one with another ; to which End the Lords Supper is instituted : and

Thirdly, for the settlement of orderly Courses and the due observation and administration of all Gods Ordinances in the house wherewith he is in Covenant : and for this use the Imposition of the hands of the Presbyterie is appointed ; viz. to give lawful authority to those that are Publick persons in the Profession of the Covenant.

Concerning the Second, We believe ;

First, That the Faithfull are bound to make use of these Signes for the Ends for which God hath given them, by taking them up and applying them to those to whom he hath ordained them, as Evidences of their dependance upon him, and of their owning of his Covenant, and of their Profession thereof before the World.

Secondly, We believe that the Sign of Baptism is to be applyed unto all whom God hath received into his Covenant, and belong unto his household ; that the Sign of the Lords Supper is to be applyed unto all that have embraced, and do entertain professedly the Covenant ; And that the Sign of the Imposition of hands is to be applyed unto all that are called and to be set apart for any Publick Office in the Church.

Hitherto We have reckoned up the Heads of the Principles of the life of Godliness, as they rise from and relate to the Covenant, which is the ground of all Spiritual Relations between God and Us. Now followeth that which is to be known concerning the substance of that life which God doth work in Us by the Covenant.

concerning the Substantials of the Life of Godliness.

The Substantials of the life of Godliness are nothing else but the power & practice of that state and life whereby we are made one with God ; and walking with Christ in the Covenant, we enjoy God in him both outwardly and inwardly.

The enjoyment of God in the inward man, is by the New creature and his life of communion with God.

Concerning the New creature these things should be known ;

1. What that change is whereby a man becometh from an Old, a New creature, and is born again.

2. How that change is wrought in the Soul by the knowledge of Christ in the Covenant ; and how the conscience is quickned therein by him, and raised to a new life.

3. How that change is discerned to be real and sincere ; and the deceitfulness of a pretended or imaginary change discovered.

Concerning the Life of inward communion with God, these things should be acknowledged.

1. What it is to know and worship God in Spirit and truth.
2. How the Spiritual man doth walk with God by faith, by hope, by love, according to the Covenant.
3. What that vertue is, whereby he is enabled to have God alwayes before his eyes, and to do all things in the name of Jesus Christ, giving glory to God the Father through him.
4. What Tentations are opposite unto this Life, both from the corruption of our nature, and from Satan; and how they are resisted.

The enjoyment of God in the Outward man, is by the open profession and practice of Obedience unto the will and wayes of God in all things: which hath two chief parts;

The first is, To deny the practice and profession of ungodliness, and of all worldly Lusts. *Tit. 2. 11, 12.*

The second is, To offer up our bodies as a living sacrifice unto God, by our reasonable serving of him in the Covenant. *Rom. 12. 1.*

Concerning the Denying of ungodliness and worldly Lusts, these things should be known.

1. What the Practice and Profession of Impiety is; as it proceedeth First, from Natural Atheism.
- Secondly, from vain Philolophy, the Traditions of men, and the Rudiments of the World.
- Thirdly, from the strong Delusions and the deceitfullness of unrighteousness, which Satan is permitted to make use of in the end of the World.
2. How the Consciences of Natural men are to be dealt withal and convicted concerning the wickedness of their Practices in this kind.
3. What the nature and the original is of Actual sins, and how they proceed from the power of inbred Lust.
4. How the motions of Actual sins are to be resisted; not only by the inward purification of the heart, but also by the outward exercises of a Mortified life, wherein the body is kept under and brought into subjection. *1 Cor. 9. 27.*

Concerning the offering our bodies a living Sacrifice unto God by the Covenant, Three things must be known, for the ordering of our conversation aright in respect of our selves, in respect of our Neighbour, and in respect of God: for hereunto the Apostle, *T.M. 2. 12.* doth referre all mens virtuous actions in this World, by Sobriety, Justice, and Religiousnes.

Sobriety doth comprehend all the way of our conversation with our selves; Justice all our conversation with our Neighbour; and Religiousnes all our conversation towards God.

And these Heads of our outward conversation ought to be handled and taken up in this order; because the duties of the First kind are such a ground-work for the Second and Third, that without Sobriety in respect of our selves, nothing can be done rightly towards God or Man; And the Duties of the Second kind are in Gods own esteeem preferred to the Duties of the Third; because he doth require

Mat. 5. 23. Mercy of us, and not Sacrifice; that is, the Works of Justice and *Mat. 12. 7, 8.* Charity towards our Neighbour, more then the Works of outward *Isa. 1. 11, 10. 19.* Worship towards himself.

[29]

Of the Ordering our way toward our selves by Sobriety.

TO be able to order our selves and all our wayes in Sobriety, we must know;

1. What the nature of Sobriety is, as it is a Rule of restraint to moderate our selves in all our Undertakings as they are ours.

2. What the nature of our Intemperance and inclination to Excelts is, and whence it cometh; viz. from Self-love; where we must know what Self-love and self pleasing is, and how all manner of Excelts proceedeth from thence.

3. How Sobriety doth proceed from the Grace of Self-denial, accompanied with Contentation, Meekness, and Lowlincs, which Christ upon the Ground of the Covenant and Promise of Rest doth invite us to learn of himself, *Mat. 11. 29.*

4. What the proper work of Sobriety is, in reference to the natural acts of Affectionis; where is to be noted that our natural affections may be two wayes vicious; either as they discompose and wrong us within our-selves, or as they tend to discompose and wrong our Neighbour. In the first Respect, they are to be regulated by Sobriety; in the second by Justice: so that the proper work of Sobriety will be to keep the acts of our natural Affections within the bounds of that lawful and necessary use whereunto God hath appointed them. And to discover these bounds, the natural Desires and Actions of Christ in the flesh as he did subordinate them unto the life of God in the Spirit, according to the Covenant, are to be taken notice of as a Rule.

5. What the Rules of Sobriety are in particular, in respect of the lusts of the flesh, as meat and drink, ease and softenes, the conjugal bed, and all other delightful actions inherent to the body.

6. What the Rules of Sobriety are in respect of the lusts of the eye, as outward sights for pleasure and curiosity; the covetousnes of Riches, and whatsoever else may be a purchase, or from without an Object of the eye to lust after.

7. What the Rules of Sobriety are in respect of the pride of life, as the affectation of Glory and Honour, the vanity of Worldly Pomp and appearance; the flattery of our selves in the way of our Passions, Emulation, Anger, Strife, Envy, and such like, which are the fruits or companions of Pride.

8. What the rules of Sobriety are for the ordering of our behaviour as well in speeches as in actions, as at all times, so especially in times of crosses and adversities, or of prosperity and joy, wherein there may be a provocation to exceed, and misbehave our selves in gestures, if not in speeches and actions contrary to Sobriety.

Of the Ordering of our way towards our Neighbours by Justice.

TO be able to order our way justly towards our Neighbour, we must know,

1. What the nature of Justice is in reference to a Society, as it is a Rule to direct every one to pay that which they owe to one another in their Society.

2. What the nature of Injustice is, and what doth incline men to deprive others of that which is their due; namely the spirit of men which lusteth to envy. Here then we should know what envy is, and how the spirit thereof supported with Pride and covetousnes, doth set men upon all manner of Injustice.

3. How the Acts and way of Justice proceed from the grace of brotherly love, and especially from these Fundamental Rules thereof; *As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise, Luke 6.31.* And, *Ye have been call d (viz. by God in the Covenant) unto Liberty: onely use not Liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. Let every one please his Neighbour for his good to edification, as Christ pleased not himself, but*

came

came to serve us for our good. Rom. 15.2, 3, 5, 7. Phil. 1. 3. till 9. Love one another as I loved you. Joh. 13.34.

4. What the proper work of Justice is, in reference to that which is good, and by Love due unto others : namely to observe all inoffensiveness and communicativeness towards every one.

5. What inoffensiveness is, and by what Rules our wayes may be made void of offence : and of what importance the observation of those Rules are to the Professors of the Covenant of Divine Love in Christ, whether their wayes relate to those that are within, or without the Church.

6. What communicativeness is, and by what Rules all good things are to be imparted unto others, either as they stand in need thereof, or otherwise they may be profitable unto them . whether it be the Communication of Mercifulnes by which we relieve them of their Miseries ; or of Bountifulnes, by which we provoke them to Love and good Works.

7. How all Dutiful actions which we owe to others in word or deed concerning their persons, or that which doth belong unto them, ought duly and obligingly to be performed, that just things may be done justly.

8. What Rules of Justice are to be observed concerning the offices of Love comparatively due to Enemies, to persons indifferently affected, and to Friends in several degrees of nearness.

• Of the Ordering of our way towards God by Religious acts.

TO be able to order our way toward God Religiously, we must know,

First, What Religiousnes is, or what the nature of that tie and obligation is, by which those that are in Covenant with God are bound in all their outward carriages to shew that they depend upon him and regard him.

Secondly, What doth incline us naturally to Irreligion, that is, not to referre our selves unto God, nor respect him as we are bound to do by the tenour of the Covenant, in all our wayes ; and whether it be not this that we easily forget his Omnipresence, and the Supremacy of his Influence over all Creatures, and regard too attentively the properties of Secondary Causes as they may have, and the thoughts of men as they have an Influence upon us.

Thirdly, how this obligation doth proceed from the conscientious apprehension of these following, and such like laws and Rules of Justice and Equity.

1. You are bought with a price ; Glorifie therefore the Lord in your Soul and in your Body, which are the Lotts. 1 Cor. 6.2.

2. He that is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh into the Glory of his Father with the holy Angels. Mar. 8.38. Matth. 10.32, 33. Luke 12.8, 9.

3. We should walk worthy of God who hath called us to his glory and kingdom. 1 Thes. 2.12.

4. As Children of God in the World without blame , we should shine as Lights, and hold forth the Word of life. Phil. 2.15, 16. and such like in 1 Pet. 1.15, 16, 17, 18. and Ephes. 5.1, 2, 8. and 1 Pet. 2.9, 10, 11, 12. and 1 Joh. 1.2, 3. and elsewhere.

Forthly, What the proper work of Religiousacts is, and whether it be not to walk alwayes in the light of a good conscience towards God and men, Acts 23. 1. and 24. 16.

Fifthly, Whether the proper Rule of a good conscience in this walking, is not to follow

follow the grace of God which bringeth Salvation, in sincerity, and not according to worldly wisdom, 2 Cor. 1.12. Tit. 2.11,12. And whether the parts of this walking are not chiefly or summarily these; 1. To confess and profess openly the truth. 2. To worship God privately and publickly, observing all his Ordinances.

Sixtly, What the Rules are of a Religious open confession of the truth by word of mouth.

Seventhly, What the Rules are of a Religious profession of the truth in deed and conversation.

Eighthly, What the Rules are of a Religious suffering for the confession and profession of the truth.

Ninthly, What the Rules are of a Religious worshipping of God in private, by Prayer, by Reading and Meditating the Word, and by private conference.

Tenthly, What the Rules are of a Religious worshipping of God in publick, by Hearing the word, and Joyning with the Professors of the name of Christ in Prayer and praises, and in the fellowship of all the publick Ordinances, whereby the Covenant is established or confirmed amongst men.

Hitherto we have mentioned the Substantials of the life of Godliness in respect of the distinct parts thereof, as well inward as outward:

But because a Thing is neither in it self compleat, which hath not all the parts joyned in such a way as is suitable to the proper End thereof, nor in respect of us compleatly known, except we understand both what the property of each part is distinctly; and also what the joyn't frame of all is, which makes up that whole, which is the Result of their union: therefore unto the former consideration another must be added, where in the union of all these parts is to be discovered, that we may see the entire frame of the whole course which is conformable unto the will of God in all things, as well inwardly as outwardly, in all Duties at once which will make up the substance of the parts of a Godly life.

And to bring us unto this Perfection, God hath given a peculiar Rule whereunto he doth oblige all men to be so fully conformable, that whosoever transgresseth in any one Point thereof, is guilty of all, Jam. 2.10. because the true and perfect observation of any one Duty, doth import a full conformity of our Wills to the Will of him who doth command all the rest; and the transgression of Gods will in any one particular, doth bewray an inconformity of our wills from the will of him who doth command all the rest; and this is to be a transgressor of the whole Law; because the whole Law is nothing else but the will of God; and the substance of our whole Obedience is nothing else but a total subjection of our wills unto his will, as it is revealed in the Law, Rom. 2.20. for God hath given the form of knowledge and of the truth in the Law, to this end that we should not displease him, but to study to please him in all things; for the whole substance of our Religious fear and love is contract-ed unto this aim, that we should do nothing that is displeasing, but every thing as it is acceptable unto him. Our performance then of all Duties in order to the fulfilling of Gods will, and observance of the Law, is the substance of the whole life of godli-ness. For the Ten Commandments given in Mount Sinai, which God wrote twice in Tables of Stone, are the Universal Rule of Righteousness, as they contain the nature of all Duties which are generally obliging unto every one, and as they comprehend in one expression, both the Spiritual and Bodily perfection of every Humane Action.

The Doctrine then of the Ten Commandments should be delivered to this effect, in Four distinct Heads.

The First should contain the Rules of interpreting the Commandments.

The Second should let us see the Abstract of all the Duties commanded, and sins forbidden therein.

The Third should let us know the Definition or Description of all these Duties and Sins, with the Means and Helps subordinate unto the duties, and the causes which beget, and the signes which manifest the sins; and although perhaps some of the things formerly mentioned in some of the parts of the life of godliness, may come to be named here again, yet this is not to be counted any ~~theologic~~ or superfluity, because the same thing may be more then once handled, under different notions and respects in severall places; Here then all duties whatsoever, and every thing opposite thereunto, are only to be handled, as they are commanded and forbidden in the Law, which is the universall rule of Righteousnes, to shew the perfection of the Law, and the nature of every action, as it agreeth or disagreeth with the rule, and the quality of every vertue and vice, as it is ranked by God in the whole frame of that life which the Law doth require or condemn: all which are materiall points of knowledge, and can no where be properly handled but in this consideration of the Law.

The fourth and last head, should describe the watch which all men should have, as well over themselves, as over others for the observation of the Law; for as all particular vertues make up but one perfection of obedience, by their conformity, unto the Rule of the Law; so all mens observation of the Law in their several wayes, doth make up but one submission to the will of God in them all, their joynct care of each others conformity unto the Law; for all Professors as they are members of each other in Christ, make up but one body and spiritual man in him; and this is the substance of the whole life of godliness, when by the grace and truth which is in Jesus Christ, the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit; for the Law of the spirit of life, which is in Christ, being through Faith effectually in us, to free us from the Law of sin and death, which is in our nature, doth make us conformable unto all that is well-pleasing unto God, so that in every thing we are enabled to prove what is that holy, perfect, and acceptable will of God.

Which things being laid open, I suppose all that justly may be desired concerning the substantials of the life of godliness, in the whole and parts, will be sufficiently discovered; and so the second part of this body of Practical Divinity will be made up.

Of the Circumstantialls of the Life of Godlinesse.

Although the former rules of Piety, which are common to all Believers and Professors, may well suffice to direct every one upon all occasions what to do, not only because they contain the grounds of all duties, and the properties of all vertues; but because God in the Covenant hath expressly promised, that he himself will teach all his children; and Christ hath engaged himself to send unto his Disciples, a spirit which shall lead them in all truth: yet seeing the Scripture doth lay open, not only the substantiall rules of the whole Profession, in the general nature of vertue and vice by the precepts of the Law, but doth mention in particular terms, the circumstantial duties also which are considerable in order to the Profession; therefore these ought distinctly to be opened, and make the third part of this body.

Where again I shall desire that it may be observed, that the things here to be handled,

handled, should be distinguished from the same things handled before, in this respect that in the foregoing part, all actions are to be considered in order to that which is their perpetuall nature, and substantiall property never to be altered ; but in this part, all actions are to be considered in order to that which is alterable in them according to the circumstances ; therefore in the former part, although the heads of all things which are to be mentioned here, may be brought in and named in their own places, yet the handling of them ought not to go any further, then to define the universal nature and properties thereof, as it is common to all times, places, cases, and circumstances ; but in this part the particular cases and circumstances, which are ordinarily incident to persons of several conditions, are to be taken into consideration , to shew them the rule of their walking therein, to observe that which is righteous and answerable to the Law : Here then we presuppose the knowledge of the definition, and true notion of all vertues and vices (which is the proper worke of the substantiall Doctrine, for under that respect all things are handled there) and we reflect upon the various subjects, objects, relations, and occasions of putting forth these actions which are discovered to be vertuous or vicious, that the way of maintaining our course in vertue, and declining vice, may be known in matters circumstantiall, as well as substantiall. These Circumstantiall duties are of three sorts , some regulate the naturall, some the spirituall circumstances of the ~~de~~ of the Professors, some relate unto both.

The naturall circumstances concern either the Sex in respect of the difference which God hath made therein ; or the societies which arise amongst men from the conjuncions thereof.

Concerning the difference which God hath put between the Male and the Female, we should know this.

1. What the preheminency of the Male is above the Female, in respect of right, to mannage domesick and publick congements.

2. What the proper worke of each Sex is, which we may call the naturall calling thereof ; that is, what the imployment is whereunto God hath created each Sex, that they should advance his glory in their severall kinds.

3. What the rules are, by which each Sex should order it selfe, within those bounds and limits of employment wherunto God hath appointed it.

Concerning the naturall Societies which arise amongst men from their conjuncti ons, we observe that

The first natural Conjunction and Societie is of the Male and Female, of one with one, for the propagation of Mankind, which is Matrimoniall, of which we should know,

First , What Gods appointment is concerning marriage ; in respect

1. Of the ends for which it is to be intended lawfully, and for which it ought not to be intended.

2. Of the persons who may or may not joyn together in that state.

3. Of the manner how it ought to be settled between these who may lawfully joyn therein.

4. Of the duties which married persons owe to one another , by which they may obtaine the lawfull ends of their Conjunction, by Gods blessing.

5. Of the causes for which marriage may lawfully be dissolved.

6. Of the manner and way how it ought to be , when needs it must be dissolved.

Secondly , What the inclinations of men are to abuse marriage, and what corrup tions are become customary therein, even amongst Professors.

Thirdly , How prejudicall the abuse of the ordinance of marriage is, not onely to the holy Profession, but even to the Society of Mankinde.

25

Fourthly, How far both Ministers and Magistrates are bound to endeavour each in their own way, to rectifie the abuses of this Ordinance, by repressing all Whoredomes, Adultery, Incests, and other unlawfull Conjunctions, as Concubinate and Polygamy, and whatsoever in this kinde is contrary to the will of God, and to the right use of nature.

The second naturall Conjunction and Society is of Parents and Children, where we must know;

1. What the duty is of Parents towards their Children joynly; in respect of their education, and of their settlement in a course of life in the world.

2. What the duty of the Mother is towards the child whiles it is an Infant; how far she is obliged to give it suck and attend it her selfe, and in what cases she may be dispensed withall in reference to these duties.

* 3. What the duty of the Father is toward the Childe after it is past the state of Infancy, and how far he is obliged to look to the education thereof himselfe; and in what cases he may be dispensed withall to commit it unto a Deputy.

4. How the peculiar care of the Daughters belongeth to the Mother, and the peculiar care of the Sons to the Father, chiefly, when they are past childe-hood.

5. What the duty of Children when they come to years of discretion is towards their Parents, and how they ought to yield unto them not onely honour and obedience, but a requitall in their old age.

6. How far the law of Marriage, by which a man is appointed to leave Father and Mother, and cleave to his wife, doth emancipate him from subjection and dependency upon his Parents.

7. How family duties ought to be observed in the Societies of Parents and Children; and what obligation doth lie upon Parents to worship God with those of their family.

The third naturall Conjunction and Society is of brethren and sisters, and of kinsfolks, where we must know;

1. What the nature and extent of the relation is, and how it differs from the foregoing of Man and Wife, and parent and childe.

2. What the duties of kinsfolks are towards each other.

3. What the proper care and affection is, which is more due unto kinsfolks respectively, then unto others; though these in all respects be as commendable, and perhaps farre more commendable for grace and vertue then they.

The fourth naturall Conjunction and Society, is of Alliance, where we must know;

1. What the nature and extent of this relation is, and how far it is inferior unto that of kindred.

2. What the proper duties thereof are more to each other, then to meere strangers.

All these Conjunctions and Societies are properly naturall, and unavoydably necessary, if we suppose the propagation of Mankinde by Marriage; there are other conjunctions and societies which are more voluntary and freely taken up, or left off, as there is cause found; and these are againe either of one with one, or of many together in a Society.

The voluntary conjunction and society of one with one, is of Master and servant, where must be known;

1. For what ends, and in what employments, men ought to seek for others to serve them; and in what things they ought to serve themselves.

2. What the duties are of Masters towards their Servants.

3. What lawfull services and employments are in humane Societies, and for what ends

ends men ought to offer themselves to be servants unto others.

4. What the duties are which servants owe unto their Masters, and how they ought as Christians to performe the same.

The Voluntary Conjunction and Society of many together in one Body, is either of many Families to make a City, or of Cities to make Provinces, or of Provinces to make Nations and Kingdoms: all which are settled in their Relations by Laws, and maintained therein by Officers indued with Authority and Power to administer the same; whence doth arise the Office of Magistrates and Subjects: where we must know,

concerning Magistrates;

1. **V**HAT a Magistrate is in the Societies of Christians.
2. Whence Magistrates have their Authority.

3. What the proper work of their Employment is for the good of the Publick Society; And whether it be not to procure the observation of Both the Tables of the Mosaical Law in the Common-wealth over which they are Rulers.

4. How the Sword is committed unto them, and to be used by them for Vengeance against evill Doers, and for the Reward of those that are good.
5. For what End Taxes and Customs are to be laid upon Subjects.
6. What Offices are necessary and lawfull to be constituted for the Peace and Safety of Humane Societies.
7. What maketh Warre lawfull in a Christian Magistrate, and what unlawfull.
8. What Power he hath to administer Oaths, and for what Ends.

Concerning Subjects we must know;

1. **V**HAT the Duty of a Christian Subject is towards the Supream and Subordinate Magistrates.

2. How they ought to be subject not only for wrath, but for Conscience sake.

3. Wherein a Christian ought not to be in subjection, or a Servant unto men.

HIthero we have mentioned the Heads of Matters which relate unto the Circumstances of the Natural life; now follow the Circumstances of the Spiritual Life of Professors.

THE Spiritual Life of Professors doth Relate to the Church, either as it is made up of Members to make one Body; or as in it are Offices and Officers with several Charges.

Concerning the Members of the Church, we must know;

1. **V**HAT Right and Relation a true Professor of Christianitie hath to any, or all the Churches of Christ.

2. What use he ought to make of that Right and Relation; and how he should apply himself to some particular Congregation, where his convenience of Edification is greatest;

3. How the Common Profession and the Duties of holy Communion with all the Members of Christ are to be maintained, notwithstanding the application may be ordinarily made unto one particular Congregation.

4. What the Care is which Members owe to one another in the Communion of Saints, to build up each other in the Common Profession.

5. What the peculiar Duty and Respect is which all Professors owe unto those that are the Leaders of others in the Profession, for their works sake.

6. How all Members and Professors ought to walk towards those that are without, as to adorn the Doctrine of the Gospel in all things.

concerning those that bear Office in the Church of God we, must know;

1. **VV**Hat the Office of a Pastor is, and how he ought to discharge it.

2. What the Office of the Teacher is, and how he ought to discharge it.

3. How the Duties of the Pastor and Teacher are conjoint, and how distinct and separate.

4. What the Office of a Ruling Elder is, and how he ought to discharge it.

5. What the Office of a Deacon is, and how he ought to discharge it.

6. What Correspondence and Communion these Officers ought to have one with another, for the strengthening of each others hands in their Duties towards the Flock.

7. What Correspondence and Communion the Officers of several Congregations ought to have one with another, for the maintaining of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace amongst themselves, to prevent or remedy Differences, and for the propagating of the truth unto others that have not as yet received it.

Of all these States and Relations, the Duties should be laid open as they are prescribed in the Word distinctly.

Then the state and Calling which hath a respect to all sorts of Societies jovently, as being the Seed-plot and Seminary of all Vertues to be exercised therein, is the state of Schooles: where ought to be delivered;

1. What kinds of Schools ought to be constituted, suitable to the Principles and Life of Christianity.

2. To whom the Care of erecting and reforming of Schools doth belong: and what necessity there is of this work.

3. What the peculiar Duties are of School-Masters and Mistresses, and of Schellers of both Sexes.

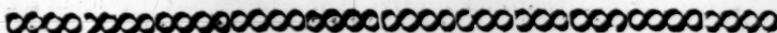
Hitherto, I have reckoned up summarily the Heads of those Truths which will make a full Body of Practical Divinity, if they be throughly handled, and if the particulars which may be referred thereunto be fitly brought in.

As concerning the Supplement of Cases of Conscience, I shall say nothing for the present: hoping that if the Positive Truths be Compleatly handled, and a General Rule shewed how to draw from the Tenor of the Covenant, a resolution of Conscientiable Difficulties, there will be no great need of any large Treatise in this kind. Yet I will not deny but that a full Body of Case-Divinity may be usefull, if well ordered and published by it self: but I would not have the Body of Positive Truths overburdened with Cases: because our main Study ought to be about the knowledge of the Rules, and our exercise about the application of the same to our wayes: therefore we need not to propose a body of Difficulties to be resolved, but our wisdome will be, either to avoyd them so far as may be by a cleer direction preventing them, or to overcome them when they cannot be avoyded, by such a method as may be easie, and followed by all that understand the Truth of Gods meaning, and their own duty in the Covenant.

Thus I have adventured to cut out Work, and offer Tasks to those that shall be willing to joyn in compleating this pious Undertaking: not that I presume to precribe or limit any within these bounds, or to follow this Method, but that I would give occasion unto such General hints as these are. For unto these three Heads of

Principles, Substantialls, and Circumstancials of Practice, I suppose all the Collections which may be made out of our Authors, may be referred ; and if this Effect can be obtained in any competent measure ; I shall have what I intended by these Proposals.

Hitherto I have spoken of the Body of Practical Divinity, which I conceive will answer the request of Forrain Protestant Divines made unto us. Now I shall come to the Reasons why it ought to be compiled and imparted unto them.



Of the Second.

What the Reasons and Motives are, which should induce us to make up this Body of Divinity, and Communicate it to Forraine Protestant Churches.

If to advance this Gospel-work, there were nothing else to move us, but the excellency of the thing it self, and the Call which we have thereunto by forraine Churches, with thole Arguments which in their Letter they have alledged : Truely these inducements alone might abundantly suffice, and ought to engage us most effectually thereunto : for if we have any true zeal to the glory of God, by the Propagation of the Gospel ; if there is any sincere inclination to entertain the Communion of the Spirit, by the Communication of spiritual Gifts and Graces : and if there is any fervency of love toward the Brother hood, or affections of serviceableness towards the fellow-members of Jesu Christ ; all others reasons besides those which they offer unto us, will be found superfluous, and of little use to perfwade ; because the heart that is rightly set in heavenly places, and raised unto the true Object's which unite the same with God, is not acted by earthly Motives, although it may reflect sometimes not unprofitably upon matters of particular concernment.

But we find too often (and that to our great grief) when we have to deal even with men that are accounted eminent in the Profession of Religion, and that are of good abilities to judge of all things else, that yet those Reasons which in their own nature are best, most spiritual, and most univeral, are not towards them most effectual to perfwade ; but the motives which are more particular, more outward, and of lesser worth, doth rather work, and take more powerfully with them. Whether this doth fall out, either because good Men do not alwayes throughly understand the best Reasons ; or because the matter thereof though understood, yet is not alwayes mainly and directly intended : or because the Reasons which are of lesse worth, are alwayes more level to all mens natural Capacities ; Or lastly, because outward and particular matters are most suitable to close with humane affections ; I will not now stand to discourse. What ever the cause of this may be, I shall endeavour at this time to prevent it, by taking into consideration both sorts of Reasons ; that both such who (being truly Spiritual) are in love with Christianity for it self, and such also who (walking in a lower Spheree) regard more directly humane and outward relations, may finde in this undertaking, that where with they ought to be affected.

If we look then before other things upon God, and upon our selves as in his hand ;

we may perceive that he doth highly honour us above our reformed Brethren : Chiefly herein, that having received with them the truth of the Gospel in the purity thereof, we are made partakers above them of this most eminent gift of practical knowldg, and enjoy the means thereof more abundantly then any other Church whatsoever : Yet the enjoyment of the most eminent of his gifts is not all the Honour which God hath conferred upon us , but he hath caused the Excellency of this blessing to become apparent unto all the Churches : So that they not onely respect, love and esteem us for the same , but they heartily wish and desire for themselves the same favour at Gods hands ; and they are moved without envy , to make their application unto us in a friendly manner, that we in love to Gods glory would impart unto them the fruit of that kindness which he hath bestowed upon us . Thus we see that he hath not onely reference to himself, put Ornaments upon us, to beautifie us with salvation, but in reference to our Brethren, he is pleased by this means to make us honourable amongst them ; for he doth set us forth in their eyes as vessels which contain the Richest of his graces , and by whom he seems to be willing to make unto all people his feast of fat things, full of marrow, Isa. 25.6. and a feast of wines on the lees well refined ; and least we should not take notice that we are fitted to be serviceable in this kinde unto the whole household of faith, he hath moved some of the chief members thereof (who are brands pluckt out of the fire of persecution) to put us in minde of this part of our duty , by suing towards us , and calling upon us for the improvement of this peculiar Talent , unto the end for which the Lord hath given the same unto us ; for they tell us in their Letter, God hath given all his Gifts to every one to profit withall : That to profit with his Gifts is to administer unto others ; That we are not the direct owners of his Gifts, nor are they our propriety to use them as we please, but all our Title to them is onely this, that we are Stewards thereof to use them as he hath appointed us ; and as by the right use thereof we may expect a great reward and increale of Glory to our selves ; so by the abuse of our trust, that is, the not using of our Talent to benefit others thereby ; we shall be found unprofitable servants, and deserve both to be deprived of the Grace we have received, and to be cast off into utter darkness where weeping is and gnashing of teeth for ever . Thus we see they put us to the tryall of our love towards God, by the discovery of our willingness to please him in fulfilling the known purpose of his will They put us to the trial of our love towards our Brethren, by the manifestation of our Resolutio[n] to furnish them with that which may benefit them to their Edification ; They put us to the triall of our faithfulness both to towards God and Man, by our behaviour in our Stewardship and obedience to him that doth employ us, and our forwardnes to dispence his Gifts unto our Brethren, to whom by his appointment we are bound to bestow them ; And they put us unto the tryall of our sincerity in believing the Promises, and fearing the Threatnings , by the sense we have of the rewards that shall be given to those that use rightly, and that abuse their Talent : And for all this they not only set before our eyes the thankfulness which we owe unto God for the honour he hath conferred upon us more then upon others ; but they put us in minde of the wayes by which onely we are enabled to Glorifie God here on Earth amongst men : by which we are made capable of being glorified with himself in heaven hereafter ; and by which the Justice is maintained, which maketh all the Subjects of his Kingdom through the Holines of their Communion, acceptable and sensible of their own and each others happiness, and without which there would be little difference between the State of Christ's Kingdom and the Kingdom of this World . For as concerning our thankfulness towards God for the honour done to us by him, seeing our goodnes cannot be exceeded unto him Psa. 16.

2. (for no man can be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself, Job. 22.2.) but onely unto the Saints that are in the Earth, and to the excellent ones in whom is all our delight: What other or lesse acknowledgement can we render unto him, then affectionately to endeavour, that the fruits of his kindness towards us may have some reflexion back again towards him, by redounding to the comfort of his own dearest Children.

And concerning the onely way by which we are enabled to glorifie God on Earth, our Saviour tells us that herein his Father is glorified, that we bear much fruit and so become his Disciples; No man can shew forth the Fathers Glory otherwise, then as it and he is in the Son, nor can any man be in the Son, otherwise by becoming his Disciple; nor can any man become his Disciple otherwise but by following him in the way wherein he did glorifie his Father: Whence it is that the Apostle teaching us to glorifie God with one mind and mouth, Rom. 15.6, 7. doth set Christs example before us as the onely rule, bidding us receive one another as Christ also received us to the glory of God: Now the way by which Christ received us to the glory of his Father, was no other but by the imparting of his Fathers Graces, and the free propagation of his goodness unto Man-kinde; by this means he hath (as the true Vine) born much fruit, & by this means we also shall bear much fruit, if herein we become his Disciples; nor is there any other way on Earth opened but this to glorifie God amongst men; for all good works, without which no Glory can be given unto God, of what kind soever, glorifie him only in this, that they shew forth his vertues, and cause men to take notice of the excellency of his Nature, that they may have cause to admire and love, and praise him in the same; and if we do not set our hearts entirely to work all our works in God, that he may thus be glorified thereby we have renounced in our heart the great end of our Creation, which is nothing else but his glory; and the only means by which that end is attainable, are good works shewed forth unto men, Mat. 5.16. for we are Gods workmanship created in Jesus Christ unto Good Works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them, that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding Riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus, Ephes. 2.7, 10. Thus then the only way to glorifie God the Author of this Talent is to improve it, by imparting unto others freely that which Christ hath freely given unto us.

Nor is there a readier way by which we are made capable of being glorified with God hereafter, then thus to glorifie him on Earth; we see the sloathful servant was deprived of glory, because he was sloathful; and others were made partakers thereof, because they were diligent and faithful in using their Talents; and the promise is that such as are wise shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament; and they that turn many unto Righteousnes, as the Stars for ever and ever. This then is our wisdome to win louls unto God, and turn many unto Righteousnes, and this will prove the greatest folly, and the greatest unthankfulness that we can be guilty of, that having so great a Talent in our hand, and so fit for such a service, we should not thereby Honour God by making it usefull to the enlargement of his Kingdom.

But above all this, there is a Law of Justice which doth require this duty of us as a debt to be paid unto all that are susceptible of the benefit thereof; but chiefly unto those that challenge it as having a right therunto; all that belong to the household of Faith, have a right to all the priviledges of the house, and all the gifts and treasures pertaining to it are theirs; all things are yours saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 3.21.22. because every member of the Body hath an interest in all the graces which flow from the head as conferred upon the Body, nor doth any member possesse any thing for it

self, but for the whole; nor is anything in it self, but as it standeth in its place to serve the whole, and as it belongeth unto other members; for we are said to be members one of another. So that we have a right to challenge for our use, as our own, all the graces which another hath, if we stand in need thereof, nor is it lawful for any to refuse the Communication of any spiritual gift wherewith he is possessed, to any that craveth it of him in the name of Christ, except he will make himself guilty of the breach of the great and Fundamental law of the Kingdom of Heaven, upon which the happiness of that whole State is settled; for the happiness of the State of Christianity above all the States of the world is this, that all the Subjects thereof are but one new Creature and Spiritual man in Christ, that they are made and called to serve one another in Love, as he served us, and to enjoy him in each other, as he is the same light of Truth, and light of God in all; for the enjoyments and possessions of all other men in all other States and Kingdoms of this World are distinct and peculiar to every one, because some things are incomunicably proper to some more then to others, as their lot is fallen amongst men (and except this Law in natural things were observed, there would be nothing but endless and inextricable confusion and strife, yea much more then now is amongst the Sons of men) But it is not so in Spiritual things; the Spiritual man his joy is this, that others partake of all his blessings, that others have a right in him and interest, and he in them for all their Grace, and that he is a debtor of all that he hath unto every one, and every one are debtors of all that they have unto him; So that none can count himself happy or compleate in any thing, or ought to rest contented within himself, without the Happiness, Perfection and contentedness of others: Thus none can want what another hath; and what God hath given unto any, it is to be offered unto all; and he that doth not live by this Rule in the Church of God, doth ex. lude his own soul from the Communion of Saints, and maketh himself incapable of all the Felicities of Christs Kingdom. We see then how many and how strong the obligations are, which bind us unto this duty of Spiritual Communication of the graces which we have received to profit withall; for if we should not intend this, we shall discover our selves to be of all men the most ingrateful towards God, and most unworthy of all the Honours which he hath cast upon us; We shall shew our selves destitute of all love, both to God and man, and of all faithfulness in the trust committed unto us, of all sincerity in our Profession, and of all care either to advance Gods glory as becometh the Disciples of Christ, or to be advanced unto glory by him, or to maintain the happiness of our own Estate by fellowship with his members, or finally to discharge the debt of Righteousness which we owe unto others on Gods behalf; for God hath assigned the payment of all the debts which we owe unto him, which are the fruits of his Graces towards us, to be laid out upon the members of Jesus Christ, that much joy and many thanksgivings from many hearts and mouths, may redound to the glory of the Father through him. If then we should hold this truth of God in unrighteousnes, we should not only be found enemies to God and our selves, so far as in us lyeth to frustrate him of his intent, and our selves of all the honour whereunto he doth design us, but opposite unto all goodness, to suppress the brightness of his glory, to darken the comforts of his Children, to defraud our Brethren of their just reward and expectation, and to deprive all sorts of men of that wherein we are indebted unto them; for it is not only our Brethren (that challenge that which is their right, -of us, on Gods behalf) to whom we owe this duty as a debt, but we owe it unto all men; that either now, or in after ages may profit thereby, towards the advancement of Christs Kingdom;

dom ; and that is the thing which our Brethren in the conclusion of their Letter, preſte (though briefly yet throughly) upon us : for having proposed Gods intention in giving his Gifts, our duty anſwerable therunto, and their demand grounded upon both they present unto us the benefits which ensue our performance of their requeſt, which are all the effects of the truth which is in the Gospel , as by it ſelf it is uſefull unto all ſorts of perſons, young and old, Teachers and thoſe that are taught, Godly and ungodly, Peaceable and contentious : True Profefſors and thoſe that erre from the Truth , whether by Hypocrifie, or Security, or Obſtinacy ; and in a word to all men, aſwell of this age as of that which ſhall arife hereafter, all the advantages of Inſtruction, Direction, correction, comfort, Reprooſ and conviction, tending to ſet forward peace and joy, through Righteousnes and Holineſs in the ſouls of men, or whatſoever blessing elſe, any ſhall stand in need of in their ſeveral conditions : all this I ſay, we are Debtors to procure unto them, by the means which are put in our hands to that effect ; for at this time both God and Men do call upon us to make this uſe of our Peculiar Talent of the word of life, in holding it forth unto them.

If therefore we ſhould hide our Talent , and put this candle which the Lord hath lighted among us to give light unto all that are in the house, under a bushel, that is, if we condeſcend not to this their deſire, we ſhall wrong all the Churches ; we ſhall rob them in particular that ſue for it of what is their due : and as much as in us lieth we ſhall make the word of Truth ineffectual, and ſhew our ſelves adverſaries to his vertue and the maniſtation thereof : which how the Lord will in the End take at our hands , I ſhall not need to mention. But I shall heartily rather pray that in love to himſelf and to his Truth, our ſpirits may be ſtirred up to behave our ſelves in the opportunity of doing this ſervice as ſhall be moſt anſwerable unto our own happiness, and the glory and the kingdom of Christ whereunto we are called.

These are the conſiderations which from the nature of the Duty it ſelf ſhould induce us to the performance thereof , which our Brethren in their Letter having onely touched and pointed at , I have thought good a little further thus to enlarge, that whatever ſhall be undertaken in this kind, may proceed from the right Principle and frame of heart, which will make the work acceptable unto God and profitable unto thoſe that go about it. For if the work be not intended upon theſe grounds, and upon theſe alone, directly and principally without worldly conſiderations and humane Reſpects as leading Motives, it will find but ſmall ſucces , and little conduct from the Spirit of grace to give it a furtherance, because no enterpriſe can have more strength then its chief Aim and Object can give it.

And although ſome other Arguments of this nature and to the ſame effect might be alledged, or the ſame might be further inſisted upon, perhaps not unprofitably ; yet because theſe Motives are the chief to which all others may be referred, and ſo evident that they cannot (as I conceive) be denied, and of ſuch efficacy (if laid to heart) that where they take not, none other in this kind are like to perſuade ; therefore I ſhall not inſist any further upon them, but come to the ſecond ſort of Persuaſions, which in order unto theſe foregoing may perhaps adde something to our zeal and resolution as it proceſſeth from a mixt affection ; which even good men are inclinable ſometime to entertain rather as they are men, then as they are the Children of the moſt High, depending immediately upon his Will.

If we look then in the ſecond place upon our ſelves as we are amonſt the Profefſors of the Gospel, engaged not only to maintain the credit of the Profefſion, but to advance the Reformation of the Churches both at home and abroad, and to concurre with Forraign Protestants to diſtill the Common Caufe of Religion againſt the Enemis

mies thereof, we shall find nothing more suitable to the credite of our Profession, or more advantagious to our own and others reformation, or more effectual in our concurrence to assist Forraineis in the Common Cause, then the Compleating of this Body of Practical Divinity will be.

The Credit of our Profession doth include a twofold Notion : the one doth look at the Profession in it self, the other at us as Professors: in both these, there is some matter of Credit to be upheld as to men. In reference to the Profession, we are bound in conscience (seeing we believe it to be the saving Truth of God) to make it Creditable and Honourable before all men, approving it unto the conscience to be such as we believe it to be. And in reference to our selves, the good opinion others have of our sincerity, zeal and ability in the way of the Profession, doth oblige us in honesty to endeavour to the utmost to answer their expectation, and maintain the Honour of our good name in relation to our Religion. In these respects I say, the compleating of this Practical Body of Divinity will be of special use, as well for the honour of the Profession, as for our credit in upholding it.

For whereas nothing doth so much either scandalize the weak, or stagger the ignorant, at the profession of the Protestant Religion, or give advantage on the one hand unto the Papists to seduce silly souls to a superstitious worship, as this reproach, *That we are all broken to pieces among our-selves, and divided in our sense about Religion, having no certainty in anything:* on the other hand unto the self-conceited Libertines, to entice high minded Zelots to the pride of singular Saintship, as this other Reproach; *That we rest in practice of forms; and being destitute of the power of God-Liness, have nothing that is spiritual in our Profession:* Whereas (I say) both these Adversaries labour different ways, and upon colourable pretences (taken from particular misdemeanors wrongfully applied unto the whole substance of Religion) to discredit and blemish the profession of the truth (which we Ministers are chiefly bound to uphold) there can be no course either more answerable to the nature of our Calling, or so proper to stop the mouths of these Adversaries, or so fit to settle the wavering thoughts of unstable souls, or more effectual to vindicate the credit of the Profession from the aspersions of division, of uncertainty, of formality, and of the want of spiritual power, then to make up this Practical Body of Divinity. For it being composed of those many Positive doctrines which are undeniably evident in the Scriptures, which being understood will be clear to the conscience by their own light, which will manifest all the true grounds of spiritual knowledge, not fantastically but with real demonstrations, and which unanimously all Protestants will fully acknowledge to be the substance of their Profession and Religion: I say, those Doctrines being gathered into a full body, will stand as an uncontroulable witness for the credit of the Truth against all these injurious reproaches.

Nor can it be imagined that in the great multitude and variety of particular Opinions, in the manifold disputes, and inconsiderate heats of men about matters extra-fundamental, and in the different practises of things which are but circumstantial, a way of Peace and Unity should either be found for our selves, or shewed unto others, by any other means then by a demonstration of our agreement in all truths and duties which are necessary for Salvation in respect of God, and profitable for edification in respect of one another: And this is that which our Brethren in the Latter part of their letter hint at, when they tell us that such a body of Divinity will not only be serviceable for Schollars, but even for Teachers, to furnish them with more usefull matter in their Sermons then now they are able to find in the books of controversy, whereto almost all their Learning is reduced, representing unto them,

the evil which befallth most of their Churches : viz. that they are overwhelmed with matters of Controversie : that their controversial writings are void of Piety, full of bitterness, and no ways tending to edification : And that their young Schollars of Divinity being trained up to this way of contentious Learning, for want of better Teaching, prove in the course of their Ministry very often void of all Charitableness, and strangers to peaceable Affections. Which evils by our Pious assistance and endeavours they hope may be remedied, if we would gather out of our Authors, who handle matters of Divinity in a Practical way as they relate to conscience ; a full and sound body of saving and savory truths, which may be put into their hands to waken them unto Righteousnes. For they conceive not amiss that by Gods blessing such an Instrument of knowledge and way of Teaching which it will produce, may not only season their spirits with meek and humble thoughts concerning themselves, and with loving, kind and merciful affections towards their Neighbours (which will make them peaceable) but may work upon them the power of Godlines, when they shall perceive how the Theoretical and necessary Truths of Faith which they make now matters of strife, and have disregarded as to their true usefulness, ought to be applied unto their own and other mens consciences, to teach them to walk with God in all their wayes.

And indeed this is a sad matter, whick not only those Churches groan under, but all the rest more or lesse, have cause to bemoan : That because many in the Ministry do spend their strength and wit upon needless and curious dispensations about matters of private opinion, rather than upon the application of known and necessary Doctrines unto conscience, because these disputationes are agitated with more provocation to heat and animosity, then to regular and modest searches after the way to resolve doubts impartially ; and because the smallest differences of opinions beget ordinarily the extreamest differences of affections, when men study no Rules of moderation in respect of Passions, or of being wise to Sobriety in respect of contemplations, or of mutual forbearance in respect of actions (all which are things if not hated, yet suspected, slighted and neglected almost every where in this age) I say because these disorders (which like weeds in a Garden not weeded, overgrow the Church) have taken place almost every where ; it is very doleful to see, that the main and great truths of the Profession are extreemly neglected and not at all Cultivated; and that by this means, the adversaries (who lie in wait to deceive the simple, and watch to discredit our Religion) do get all the advantages which almost they can desire, to bring their ends to passe upon us, and disrepect upon our Profession ; for when the frames of matters are discomposed, as now they are in all the Churches (by reason of the alterations which are brought upon the States of the world :) it is no great difficulty for cunning men, to work Sinister impressions, and thoughts of contempt against our Profession, upon weak Spirits, who know not the substance and true grounds of our Religion; but look only (as most men do) superficially upon the outward appearance, and the worst side of other mens behaviours and failings.

For these causes, if we have any sense of Honour for the Truth, and if we have any desire as in conscience we are bound to have, to maintain the Credit of our Religion, and to free it from the occasions of all these prejudices, we should set our selves earnestly to hold forth, upon the Common and undenyable grounds of Truth, the substantial Excellency of the Doctrine of Piety, which by the making up of this Practical Body of Divinity may be done, and by none other way so effectually.

As for our own credit amongst our Brethren in reference to the Profession, if we

Study not to maintain it in Gods way, by the Propagation of the Truth wherewith we are intrusted, certainly God will blast it more then ever it hath been raised; Nor can we expect that any thing will uphold our Reputation in Gods way, amongst our Brethren, so much, as the satisfaction which they expect, and we ought to give unto them in this their desire; for herein they put us unto the real proof of our sincerity, whether or no we are willing to do any thing for the Faith, and for them; and if in this we fail them, we shall deserve to lose our Credit with them, and that most justly.

The Ministers of the Churches of Great Brittan have always been esteemed by the rest of the reformed Protestants, to be found in judgement, learned in the way of Piety, and zealous in the practice thereof, moderate in their affections, and discreet in their writings against Dissentors: Therefore in the work of reconciliation between the Lutherans & the Reformed Churches, they were never excepted against by either side, but rather accepted as Mediators of the difference by both sides, but chiefly by the side which is best reformed, whose confidence towards us, and esteem of us is clearly manifested by the tenor of this letter which hath been written to us about the body of Practical Divinity; for therein with a great deal of modesty and humility, they not only defer a great deal of respect unto the worth that God hath put upon us, but they invite us to receive the Honour of being their leaders to Godliness, and their Teachers unto after ages; and although we may not without presumption, think the better of our selves, because others prefer us in Honour to themselves, or have any high thoughts of our own sufficiency (for who is sufficient for such things? and Christ we know is the only leader and teacher) because our Brethren esteem highly of us by submission unto the Grace of God in us; yet if there be any truth of generosity in our Spirits, or any resentment of duty towards such as love us in the Lord, we cannot be insensible of so mighty a provocation as this unto love and good works, but with all zeal, in true Humility, giving glory unto God, we are bound to the utmost of our abilities to impart our selves unto them: not so much that they may not seem deceived in us, and we found unworthy of the Honour given to us; but that the free gift of Grace may be exalted in the Communion of Saints, and God alone glorified thereby. Even amongst morall men it is true, that Commendations add life unto virtue; and that as the best things in their nature are most Communicable; so it is one of the chiefeſt delights of the best natures to Communicate the ſame, not ſo much to gain praise, as to do that which is good in it ſelf, and praife-worthy; which is the contentment of a vertuous diſpoſition; and if this is true in morall diſpoſitions, how much more ought it to be in thoſe that are Spiritual: if therefore there be any virtue, if there be any praife, let us think not only how to make good the esteem which they have of us, but rather to do that which is good and commendable, as it is acceptable unto God and approved of men; for upon this ground the Apostle, Phil. 4. 8. doth recom mend unto our care and ſtudy, all things that are true, all things that are honest, all things that are just, all things that are pure, all things that are lovely, and all things that are of good report; and that in respect of virtue, and in respect of praife: And if in this work which we are now exhorting to be undertaken, all these Motives concur at once, ſo fully and ſo eminently as in nothing more; and that not in a private but in a publick respect; then it followeth, that if there be any virtue or ſense of praife to be regarded in order to the holy profession, which only is our glory, that we will not ſuffer our Reputation to fall to the ground by a careless neglect of ſo manifest a duty, wherein our credit not only is ſo deeply engaged, but our Religion it ſelf extremely concerned: So that if upon these motives and confiderations, this busynesse should

[30]

should not at all be effected, it would not only be an Argument of a most brutish insensibility and stupidity in us towards that which is true honour; but it would clearly evince the unsoundness of our hearts in the Profession it self, when we should appear so careless of maintaining and propagating the truth thereof, that even with the loss of our reputation, and the loss of the love of those that have sued to us for this duty, we should suffer it to be blasted and lie under contempt, when it is in our power to vindicate both it and our selves from reproaches.

And thus much concerning the point of reputation; The next Motive in this kind is the advancement of the Reformation of the Churches, both at home and abroad; a thing which doth mainly concern us, a thing whereunto we are deeply engaged, and a thing wherunto this work will be very conducible; for as concerning the Churches abroad; that it will be a profitable instrument in their hand, to set forward the Reformation which they stand in need of, we can have no greater proof than their own Confession in their Letter; For this is the very ground why they make it their suite unto us, that such a Body of Divinity may be compiled, because they expect from it and by it; an effectual means to take away the chief causes of their Distractions and Disorders in Spiritual things. And because our own Disorders in some kind here at home, in stead of being Reformed, have increased of late, and do proceed from the same diseases which have begotten theirs; therefore in procuring a Remedy for our selves, we may hope to become helpful unto them also.

Now that this Body of Practical Divinity will be very useful to this purpose, may be gathered from the nature of our disease, and the property of the cure to Remedy the same.

The diseases which afflict us, proceed from the ignorance and distempers of our minde in things pertaining to God, and from the unruleynesse of walking in things pertaining to Men: This ignorance in the understanding, and distemper in the will, and unruleynesse in the outward man, is fomented by the slight and cunning craftiness of some men of corrupt minds, who being reprobate concerning the Faith (as nor adhering to the Testimony of Jesus in the Word, which is the rule thereof) and having taken up either a Superstitious and Traditional formality, or a singular and self-conceited Spirituality of worship and of godlinesse, they deny the power and resist the truth of both, by taking away the grounds, and making void the Common Profession of Christianity.

These men both superstitiously and singularly affected, seeking to get followers unto their severall wayes and opinions, agree to walt the Churches, and to blast with a pestilent breath all that is not conformable to their practice, if they can finde any small colour for raising Calumnies against it; and thus they fill the Churches with disputes, and the heads of ignorant people with profane and vain bablings, which dayly increase unto more ungodlinesse: For by this means scandals are multiplied, the unity of the Spirit dissolved, the bonds of peace neglected, factions set on foot and continued with animosity, wherein the weaker sort as Children are tossed too and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine, till they lose their hold of all Principles, and then give themselves over to Atheism.

This is the nature of our diseases both at home and abroad; therefore the Remedy for both will be the same, which can be none other but to this effect.

First, that the faithful Ministers and Professors of the Gospel, both there and here, should stand fast together in one Spirit and one mind; living together in one way for the faith of the Gospel, and in nothing terrified by their adversaries.

Secondly, that they should both with one consent agree upon some profitable way

of handling necessary and useful Controversies, and of shunning profane and vain bablings, and the contradiction of Science falsely so called.

Thirdly, that we and they should endeavour by all possible means to fight against our spiritual adversaries with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: holding out unto the World the same form of sound words, and dividing the Doctrine of Truth rightly in one and the same way of preaching and handling the Scriptures to advance godliness, as it becometh workmen that need not to be ashamed.

And to enable us all joynly to endeavour these things; I am very confident that next unto the graces of the Spirit, and the infallible word of truth, delivered unto us in the Scriptures (which are the two things which God hath Covenanted to continue with the Ministry unto the end of the World, *Isai. 49.21.*) I say next unto these two, I am confident that no means can be used to enable us unto that endeavour more fitly, and with Gods ordinary blessing more successfully, than this Body of Practical Divinity, if it were compiled and communicated in English to our men at home, and in Latin to those that are abroad.

For the three parts of this Body, if they were thoroughly and fully handled (as from our Authors they may be) will meet directly and in a right order with the three main and Original causes of our disorderliness and distracted condition, to shew the Spiritual wayes of Reforming the same, wherein if we shall agree to walk unanimously, as no doubt we will, we may undoubtedly also believe, that by this Union we shall to all our adversaries become not only invincible but irresistible to work the overthrow of Satans Kingdom. And this shall suffice also concerning this point of Reformation, which is to be advanced by this means: and which the faithful Ministry of this Land is bound to endeavour by the Tenor of their solemn League and Covenant in the presence of God, who hath put the means of this in our hand to be effected, and now calleth upon us to make use of the same.

The last thing which I mentioned, whereunto we are engaged, and whereunto this Body of Divinity will be effectual, is to concur with Forraign Protestants in the Common cause of Religion, and to assist them against the Common Enemies thereof. This Concurrence and assistance is an engagement that doth lie closer to us then I find it apprehended by many: Therefore I shall endeavour to represent unto those that are Conscientious in matters of publick concernment, not so much what help may be given to the cause by this means, for that may be clearly seen by what is said already, but what the obligation is which should make us Concur with Forraign Protestants to uphold the profession of the cause.

As concerning the assistance which this work will yield unto the Cause, if we will adde any thing to that which hath been said already concerning the Credit of the Profession, which it will help to uphold, and concerning the Reformation of Disorders, which it will help to take away, we may consider two things.

First, What properly the common Cause is.

Secondly, What it is that weakens our hands in prosecuting of it.

If the Common Cause of Protestants be made any thing else then the Propagating of the light of the Gospel, which is attested in the Scriptures, that the Kingdom and life of Jesus Christ may take place in the souls of all men, to the Glory of God the Father, by the graces of his Spirit, it is foully mistaken.

For all that we have protested for in former time against Popery, is this, that we will not be led by the dictates of other men, to believe and practise upon implicit faith and blind obedience what they prescribe to us in matters of Religion, but that in such matters we will knowingly rely only upon the Word of God revealed in the holy Scriptures, to follow the d.ates thereof.

And

And as we are bound still to continue this Profession against Popery on the one hand ; so in these distracted times especially, we are obliged to addle a further Protestation to clear the ruth of our profession on the other hand . which is this, that as we think it not lawfull for us to give up our faith to other men , so we conceive it neither acceptable to God, nor safe for us to be led by the dictates of our own imaginations alone to believe and practice singularly and by our selves, whatever in matters of Religion we shall in our own private conceit fancy to be right ; but that we will rationally entertain and handle the word of God in the holy Scriptures, for the understanding and practising of all Religious Truths offered and duties prescribed unto us therein : that is to say , that we will not interpret the Scriptures in matter of outward duty and performance, contrary to the Common grounds of reason and righteous order amongst men ; and in matters of inward relation towards God , that we will be wise unto Sobriety, conceiving that to be the truth of the Spirit, which is most answerable to the common Principles of the Faith of all ages, and to the Spiritual state of holy Communion which Jesus Christ hath sealed in the new Covenant between God and all his Members.

The common Caufe of Protestants hath these four main interests in Christianity, by which it upholdeth the truth thereof, and thereby is distinguishable from all other Professions.

The First is, The interest of Scripture knowledge.

The Second is, The interest of the life of the Spirit.

The Third is, The interest of orderly walking in all Gods Ordinances, Natural and Spiritual.

The Fourth is, The interest of the Communion of Churches in reference to mutual edification in these forenamed matters.

These interests being all joyned and professedly followed (that is , openly owned without offence as it becometh the Disciples of Christ) make up the true Protestant Caufe, that is, the profession of Christianity : And if any one of these be not followed, the Caufe is so far deserted, as it is neglected.

By Scripture knowledge (which is the Fundamental Rule and Seed of the Profession of Christianity) Protestants were begotten and are distinguished from Papists.

By the life of the Spirit (which is the heart and soul of the profession of Christianity) Protestants do grow up in Christ who is their head , till they shall come to a perfect man : and are distinguished from Socinians and all such as turn Christianity into a Moral profession of a new kind of Philosophy, which is refined and entertained upon revealed Principles, but in effect nothing besides or above humane Reasoning.

By the orderly walking in all Gods Ordinances (which is the visible body of the profession of Christianity) Protestants stand firm in the truth, to bear witness thereof unto the world, and are distinguished from all Libertines that pretend to be so spiritual as to be above all Ordinances.

And by the Communion of Churches (which is the activity of this visible body) Protestants are strengthned in their growth and testimony , made invincible against their adversaries, made helpful to each other, and the cause, and distinguished from all those that pretend to the singularity of Saintship in their several ways by themselves alone, with the condemnation of such as go not along with them.

These being the true interests of this Caufe as it is subordinate unto Christianity, and Christianity being taken up upon none other ground but as it is revealed in the holy Scriptures , nor maintained to any other End, but to manifest the life of Jesus Christ

Christ by his kingdom unto the world, it is clear that the whole observation of outward Ordinances and the practice of mutual Communion, which are the two latter interests of the Cause, must rise from the first, and rest in the second of those which are the former : and whatsoever designes, practices, negotiations and undertakings are said to be for Christianity or the Protestant Religion (which are all one) and do not attend to advance directly, either Scripture, knowledge or the life of the Spirit, or the walking under Ordinances, or the Communion of Churches, or do tend seemingly to advance any one of these without a reference to all the rest, they are to be judged false, deceitful and destructive to the cause and truth of Christianity.

Therefore we ought to acknowledge none to be a servant to the Cause of Christ (that is a true Protestant) but he who walketh by this Rule of the new creature ; and upon such be peace and upon the Israel of God.

As for me; I shall by Gods grace never entertain any designes and practices, or favour any motions and pretences which are undertaken and prosecuted with subtily or with a strong hand against the persons of a party disagreeing from judgement, upon this ground because they favour not my way ; but I shall make the prosecution of their forenamed interests, as by spiritual means and wavyes they are approvable to the conscience of every rational man , the open and onely rule of my walking in this Cause. And if any man shall find me straying from this path, and shew me that I am not in it, he will oblige me to thank him for converting a Sinner from the error of his Way.

Hitherto I have given you my sense of the Common Caule of Protestants ; Now I shall adde a word or two concerning that which I suppose doth weaken our hands in prosecuting of it : And that is partly an ordinary mistake ; partly an universal negle^ct & of Duty in the Actors for it.

The mistake is in two things.

First , That most meaning well to the Protestant Cause, as they do understand it, act all rather against the adversaries thereof then for the Cause it self.

Secondly , That when they act so, they take up no rule of Reason and Moderation in dealing with adversaries for their good, or upon grounds of Justice, but give way to Passion and Hatred ; and all that is imagined to be hurtful to them, is supposed to be advantagious to themselves : both which are courses altogether preposterous unto Christianity. For the true way of advancing Christianity is not destructive but edificative : that is, doth not intend to overthrow and build at leisure afterward, as the Method of some is : but it doth intend to build first Christs kingdom, that thereby it may overthrow the frame of Satans Policy : for it holdeth forth the word of life and truth , that by the manifestation of light it may dispell error and darknes^s; And when this is done, then it proceeds to the condemnation of the wavyes of unrighteousnes^s : first it bringeth our thoughts unto the obedience of Christ, that then every strong Hold of Satan, and every imagination and high thing which exalteth it self against the knowledge of God may be cast down : for except we bring Christ with us, and set him a working upon the Spirits of men that are in the snares of Satan, and led captive at his pleasure , we shall never be able to bind the strong man that hath possession of their souls : and far less shall we be able to spoil him of his goods, which are the lusts and the inclinations of the flesh , whereby he doth act self will in them, that they may not be subject to the will of God.

The way then of Christianity is more directly Positive then Negative ; and therefore it is a mistake to think that the refuting and opposing of adversaries is the main busines which ought to be prosecuted in these times : but a far greater mistake it is, to think

think that by making the wayes of our adversaries odious, or by vexing their persons, and prejudging them any way, (by hook or crook as we use to say) in the freedom and conveniences of professing their Tenets, we shall profit our Cause, or gain much upon or against them. No surely: for this is a far greater Mistake then the other; and yet this is the ordinary practice which is most commonly followed by those who are zealous for the Cause. But this way cannot possibly prove successfull, because it doth quite mistake the interest of Christianity, wh ch is nothing else but by the knowledge of the Scriptures and the life of the Spirit to bring men to walk orderly before God and men, and live in the Communion which the Members of Christ owe to each other. And if we aim not at this even towards our Adversaries to bring them hereunto, we deal not with them as Christians ought to do, but forsake our profession. Now it is neither the convincing them of their particular Errors without further instruction, nor the laying open of their shame, nor the vexing of their Spirits by troubling their persons, or stoping their professions that will bring them to any of these holy duties which uphold the truth of Christianity, but this way of dealing will rather set them further off in their Affections, both from the love of the truth and from us: so that when we shall offer them means tending directly to that which is truely their way to life, they will reject the same, only because they come from that hand which hath made it self utterly hateful unto them.

These mistakes weaken the Cause greatly; but the universal neglect which is in Two main things, doth it far more.

The First is, The neglect of duty in using spiritual means, and in a spiritual way towards Dissenters.

The Second is, The neglect of brotherly Communion in spiriual things, which is the last point of the main interest of the Cauie.

The first negle& which is of the means suitable to the prosecution of the Cause doth proceed from the forenamed mistakes, which indeed make some Professors manage Protestantcy as a State Religion, rather then a true profession of Christianity: and so they take their strength (chiefly against Dissenters) from State-Authority and practices subordinate thereunto in a worldly way of Policy rather then from the work of God and the work of the Spirit. And because many of the active men who have parts, and so love to appear in the Front and to take matters upon them, have been byassed this way, some for one, some for another interest of State, making themselves and all matters of Religion subservient thereunto: therefore it hath pleased God to besool them in their Counsels, and to suffer Satan to set Instruments awoke who have out-acted them in all these wayes: but if they had walked by Faith in simplicity and godly sincerity, according to the Rules of the Gospel within their own Sphere, & not according to worldly woldom; if they had in a caufe of Christianity made use of none other means but of those which Christ hath used and sanctified unto them, and in that way by which he and his Apostles have shewed us they should be used, they should not have miscarried as they have done, by trusting to the arm of flesh, nor could Satan either have over-reached them in their Counsels, or stopped them in their proceedings which now he hath been able to do, because he is of old Master of the Trade of Policy and power, which they of late as young Prentices were beginning to take up; and this is so undeniably evident to any that will trace Publick proceedings in some actors, and compare them with the Rules of Christianity, that I am (for my Brethrens sake) ashamed to speak of it any more: and shall therefore turn my back upon particulars to cover them with silence as my fathers nakednes, nor shall I mention any more of this neglect in the general, lest I should seem either

to reproach those with their failings, who by admonition may be reclaimed from the error of their way, or to furnish the adversaries with matter of contempt against the Cause, by reason of our traities who manage the same.

The other neglect which is of Brotherly Communion in Spiritual matters, both amongst our selves at home and toward the Churches abroad, is of all others the greatest hinderance to the Cause, and obstruction to the wayes of Gospel-edification. For if brotherly Communion were not neglected, all the former mistakes and neglects might be remedied by common advice : but because it is not at all laid to heart, no remedy can either be applyed, or being offered become effectual. For now although some can discern the causes of our miseries, and know where the Remedy thereof is to be found, and how to be made use of; yet because our spiritual gifts are like dead mens bones scattered at the graves mouth, dis-joyned, withered, buried within every mans particular brest, without life and without coherence for the actions of life : therefore we are unserviceable one to another, nor can there be any common Cure applied to common Diseases. For as the body of the Church cannot otherwise be edified then by it self through love, when every joyned supplyeth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, that which maketh the increase of the body : so the evils and distempers of the parts, which are destructive to the whole, cannot otherwise be taken away, but by the spiritual communion of gifts, and the supply of Graces from one member to another. For which cause I have made it my work for these many years to sollicite the performance of this duty, and continue still in so doing where ever I can get any opportunity to represent the necessity thereof. And although my earnest and constant Solicitations have not been so effectual as I could wish, yet I must bless God that they have not been altogether without effect; for although there is not much appearing outwardly, yet some grounds are laid which I am confident the gates of hell will never be able to shake.

It cannot be denied but that most men are yet full of their own counsels, and therefore consider not what is suggested or may be suggested by others; most men are full of their own strength; and many of those that preach self-denial unto others, practice in Spiritual matters least of it themselves, and therefore they look not out for mutual supply of strength from the brotherly communion of Graces; but all men almost do please themselves in their own way, so that they regard no man furtherthen he doth come up and follow the way of their particular chooling, because the Apostolical Rule and practice that *being free from all, we should become servants unto all*, 1 Cor. 9. 19, is for the most part not at all regarded. I lay it cannot be denied, but that for the most part as yet things are so; But when he who is now in action, shall have accomplished to scatter the Holy People, Dan. 12.17. so that none of that strength which Worldly-wise men have hitherto put their confidence in, shall be either shut up or lost any more with them; Deut. 32.36. then their eare will be opened to believe these Suggestions, and acknowledge this to be a truth, that *Christ is their Rock so far as they depend upon him, and all joynly in his way, and no further*. And if once this principle be entertained and made a Maxime to walk by in every thing, they will finde that the Lord will suddenly appear as Judge for his People, and speedily repent him for his Servants. But till we leave all the confidences which by our own devices we have chosen to our selves, and till we have freed our spirits from the delusions and the jealousies which we have framed unto our selves, to sanctifie the Lord alone in our hearts, and to make him our confidence and our fear by walking in his way, we cannot look for any prosperity, or expect that he should appear amongst us.

Now his way is the way of brotherly and holy Communion, to maintain the knowledge of his truth in the Scriptures, the life of his Spirit in the Covenant, and the observation of his Ordinances in the Church; And whatsoever Counsel we follow, or course we take which doth not lead us to the ~~one~~ End in this way, will never bring any comfort with it; And I may freely say, Because this Counsel and course hath not only been neglected by all, but slighted and despised by some, therefore the Lord hath not as yet appeared amongst us.

Thus we have seen what properly the Protestant Cause is, and what it is that weakens our hands in prosecuting the same. Now if we look back upon the Body of Practical Divinity which hath been delineated, to consider what assistance and help we may give thereby unto the Protestant Cause, in case we shall desire to concur with the forraine Churches of Christ therein, we shall find that it shall prove one of the most profitable instruments that can be made use of, to maintain all the parts and interests of the Cause, and that hardly any thing can be set on foot, that will be more serviceable both to certifie the mistakes which make us miscarry in our undertakings for Christianity, and to set us upon the duties, without which the way of our Profession cannot successfully be prosecuted.

For if you reflect upon the interests of the Cause, and take notice what fitness this Engine will have to maintain the same; you shall perceive, that both by the properties of the matter and form thereof, and by the application of the whole to the use of holy Communion, it will be most advantagious to uphold the Profession of our Religion:

For first, The matter thereof will be nothing else but the compleat and full substance of all those Doctrines which are substantial unto Christianity, as being necessary and useful to advance Scripture knowledge, to hold forth the life of the Spirit, and to direct all men in the obsevation of divine Ordinances, and in the wayes of their several Vocations to walk worthy of God, which are the only things to be intended in our Profession, if we domind Christianity for it self.

Secondly, The form of this Engine may be made such a disposition of those Doctrines, as will shew forth the true method of handling Scriptural Truths Positively, which is to infer from known and undoubted Principles, by the Evidence and Demonstration of the Spirit in matters known to the conscience, clear and undeniable conclusions, avoiding all the proposterous wayes of School and Philosophical Disputations, which for the most part proceeding from the pride and affectation of wit and learning, beget vain janglings and humane passions, multiply mistakes, and propagate impiety in the minds of those that are mainly taken therewith, and addicted therunto.

Thirdly, This whole Body of Divinity being made up as it ought to be, and for the end for which it is desired, will not only be a witness of the union of the Spirits of all Protestant Ministers in the same saving Truth, against the reproach of a Fundamental Division which is said to be amongst them; but it will be a Center of Concourse, a subject of brotherly Correspondency, and a means of mutual Communication in the work of the Gospel, by which all hands will be strengthened, and the hearts of those that faint now by reason of their solitary walking, will be encouraged then to proceed with cheerfulness, by reason of the conjunction of so great a help from all their brethren.

And truly besides the assistance and support which the truth it self will receive from this Work, by being published and held forth in that wherein all the witnesses thereof do agree, (which is one of the greatest helps that can be given to it in these times,

of disagreement, and therefore should most effectually oblige our consciences to intend it) the design of endeavouring a concurrence by this means with our Brethren, to give them encouragement to stand fast in the defence of the Cause, is extreanly necessary, and therefore also to our consciences every way binding and obligatory, so far as we desire their prosperity in the Cause?

And here I mean not our brethren only that are abroad, but even those that are at home also, whose care is not yet sortit, and who knowes how full of Distraction and Desolation it may be hereafter, and in mercy prevent it not.

For if any will observe into how many pieces we are fallen; what the changes, breaches, and Dissolutions are which are fallen and may fall upon us; what the effects are which this hath brought forth amongst us; and how a liberty to all, to do without controle whatsoever every one pleaseth, though never so offenive, is sprung up; and what the way of force (if there be a necessity still to stand under it) may further bring to passe; If I say we will observe this, which is apparent to all, we may easily gather, that nothing will be more useful and serviceable, to give a testimony of the truth unto the World, and to strengthen each others hearts and hands by the unity of the Spirit in that testimony, then this Work will be. For in the time of our Dissipation this may hopefully become a pillar to uphold the Truth, and therein a monument of our conjunction, an instrument of our concurrence in the Gospel, and by Gods blessing in the End, a means to revive and restore the witnessnes to their heavenly splendor and authority: And if there were nothing else but this (which is clearly our own special Interest) yet this alone should waken us to a full Resolution to undertake this busines with all speed and diligence; chiefly because the adversaries make no delay to accomplish their Desigues against the wayes of Righteouenes, which we are bound withall our might to maintain. But besides this necessity of joyning our spirits to a corresponding in the Truth amongst our selves against common adversaries, and the unlikelihod to be able to do it any other way, or any way so effectually and so easily as by this means: there is another strong Obligation lying upon us in respect of Forraign Protestants, to be our with them in the same Cause.

I said in the beginning of the last part of this Discourse that our engagement to a concurrence with Forraign Protestants in the common Cause of Religion, doth lie closer upon us then I finde it apprehended by many: I shall now endeavour to make this apparent by representing two things which ought sadly to be laid to heart, and are undenyably manifest in the eyes of all the world.

The one is concerning Gods judgements against those that have neglected the common Cause of Protestants.

The other is concerning our own Declarations and Oathes strictly obliging us to mind the same.

For look we upon the heavy hand of God how it hath overtaken those that have neglected the state of Forraign Churches, we shall see that because the late King and his persecuting Prelates did not mind the true interest of the Protestant Cause, which is the Gospel, because they did not endeavour to help the Lord against the mighty, that is, to protect the Churches abroad by those means which they had in their hands, and were answerable to the light of the truth whereof they made profession, and because the way of their Policy did lead them rather to side with the common adversaries for Self ends to betray the Cause, rather then to uphold it, therefore these publick Calamities have justly overtaken them, and executed the vengeance of God upon them, that they who fought themselves only, without respect unto God and their brethren, should utterly lose themselves without recovery, whilst God did find out

out a way to rescue his Churches (which they deserted) from the destruction which the Enemies desighned against them.

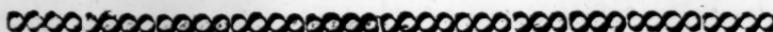
I alledge this concerning the late King and his violent Prelates , as to me one of the main visible causes of the Judgements of God upon them , for which I conceive they have been principally cast off ; namely because their betraying of the truth of the Protestant Causē was the great sin for which Christ had a quarrel with them ; both as Hypocrites , who pretending to stand for the Protestant Cause did undermine it , and despised the low condition of the Churches abroad ; and as Enemies to the Gospel , who to suppress the light thereof then breaking forth , did persecute those most who did most sincerely profest and practise Godliness at home . These sins have caused Christ to fall with his iron Rod upon them to dash them to pieces , as we have seen before our eyes , because herein their way was Diametrically opposite unto his kingdom , and therefore their sin immediatly committed against himself , whereas their others sins and designes might have a more direct Relation unto the state of the Nation , for which also the power of the Nation hath been justly made use of to overthrow them . For seeing in the great battel which now is a fighting between Christ and his Saints on the one side , and the Beast and the Kings of the Earth on the other side , the powers both of Heaven and Earth , that is , both of the spirits of men , and of the frames of States must be set a work to oppose each other respectively in their contradictory Properties : it is not possible that any visible power amongst men can remain unshaken ; And whatever is not subordinate unto the power which is given unto Christ both in Heaven and Earth , must be so shaken , as to be removed and abolished for ever both out of Heaven and earth ; hence it is that their power which they employed not for Christ , but against him , is justly brought to nought , and brought to nought before all others ; because it did strike more at the root of the Churches standing , and did more deceitfully oppose the breaking forth of the Light of the Truth then any other Enemies whatsoever .

Now they did strike at the root and did more deceitfully oppose then others , because they were entrusted with more Fundamental truth and more light then others were , and had more abilities every way to uphold the Causē better then others had , and because the Churches did rely more confidently upon them and their assistance then upon others : but the truth and the light wherewith they were entrusted , they held in unrighteousness : and the confidence which was cast upon them , and which they were willing to seem to answer , they betrayed utterly into the Enemies hands : chiefly then when Signor Con & Banzani negotiated the Papal designs with them amongst us .

This I observe with grief for the guilt which they brought upon themselves , and not out of any personal hatred against the men : for none of them ever disobligeed me otherwise then in opposing the Protestant Causē , and by neglecting the Opportunities which I was instrumental to offer unto some of them , whereby the Gōpel might have been advanced , if they had been so happy as to have made use thereof . But they regarded not the affliction of Joseph , and therefore now they are gone captive with the first that are gone into captivity , Amos 6.7. And the Justice of God upon them ought to be observed to his Glory , that others may fear , and that we our selves may beware of falling under the same condemnation : for now the same duty is required of us which then was incumbent upon them , and that as solemnly if not more strictly then ever , they were obliged therunto : for we have condemned them for that which they did neglect , and have bound our selves with Solemn Remonstrance , and a sacred Oath to mind the common Interests of Protestants which they so sinfully neglected ; we then having judged them to be un-

faithful in the Cause of God, and engaged our selves to mend their fault, if ever God should put us in a capacity so to do, if now when we are in that capacity, we should neglect this duty, we shall deserve a heavier judgement then they are fallen under, if we be found guilty of the same neglect.

The solemn Remonstrance in the name of the state of the Kingdom published Decem. 1641 before the troubles began, doth declare the whole State obliged, and consequently every faithfull subject therein, according to his place, to labour by all offices of friendship, to unite their sovrain Churches with us in the same cause, & to seek their liberty, and prosperity, as bound thereunto by charity to them, and by wisdom for our own good, for by this means, our own strength shall be increased, and by a mutual concurrence to the same common End, we shall be able to procure the good of the whole Body of the Protestant Profession. Here the State is engaged to mind the cause of the Churches abroad, and to procure the good of the whole Protestant Profession. The cause of the Churches is not a mere worldly interest, but a spiritual cause; and the main good of the whole Protestant Profession, is not a worldly concernment, but a Gospel perfection by the unity of the spirit to build up one another in love; if this good can be procured to the whole Profession, nothing will be wanting to their safety and prosperity: But if this good be not sought after and endeavoured, what ever else may be intended, will not much avail the main of their prosperity. Now to bring this to passe, and to unite them in a true Gospel interest with us, nothing can be more directly subservient then this design to gratifie their desires of obtaining such a Body of Practical Divinity from us. And to confirm this, and bind it strongly upon our conscience, the solemn League and Covenant between God and the Nations, doth engage deeply all those that took that Oath, to desire affectionately and endeavour sincerely, that the success of our proceedings may be deliverance and safety to all Gods people, and an encouragement to other Christian Churches groaning under, or in danger of the yoke of Antichristian Tyrannie, to joyn with us in the same, or like Association and Covenant, to the glory of God, enlargement of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the Peace and Tranquillity of Christian Kingdoms and Commonwealths. These are deep professions, as made in the presence of God, and therefore ought to be so much the more conscientiously minded.



Of the Third.

*How the work may be effected and imparted unto
those that have sued for it.*

TO procure the compleiment of this Body of Practical Divinity, the way is already chalked out unto us, and was agreed upon by some of our most able and godly Ministers, who before these Troubles, did offer themselves unto the Work, and engaged to take their Tasks to be elaborated under the direction of Doctor *Usher*, the Primate of *Armagh*, who then was in a powerful and plentiful condition, and likely to have undertaken the direction of the busines. As for the way, how the matter was deferred unto him, it may be seen by the adjoynd Letter, which in the year 1633. was sent him: nor did any thing stop the proceeding of the Work, before our late troubles

troubles began in *Ireland* and *England*, but the want of a compleat Plat-form, and some other contrivances which were referred to the *Primate* to effect: but since the troubles both here and in *Ireland* have unsettled all men so, that although there had been a Plat-form drawn up, yet few or none could have performed any thing in the Tasks which they might have taken; therefore the Work hath been hitherto interrupted. But seeing now we are in some hope that the Lord will be merciful to us, and remove the caules of future Distractions, we may also expect that there will be faithful and able Agents found to undertake this Work, which will be so useful for all the Churches; and to bring it about, the way may be this.

First, Let either this, or some other Plat-form be held forth, that such as will chuse Tasks, may know what to pitch upon.

Then let two hands be chosen as Directors, to whom all the Tasks when they shall be perfected may be brought in; that they may according to the Plat-form which they shall think fittest to be followed, set every piece in its own place, and joyn every limme of the Body to its Neighbour, till it be compleated and fitted for the Prese.

When the Directors of the Work are chosen, let every one who doth choose a Task, be obliged to notifie his Undertaking to one of them, that they may know what the Tasks are which are in hand, and by whom undertaken, that if all which is to be perfected hath not found a peculiar Workman, some body may be sought out and engaged to become the Undertaker for that which shall be wanting; and in case two should take the same Work in hand unknown to one another, the Directors may give them notice thereof, and move them to divide their Work between them, that it may be done with more expedition, or incline one of them to take some other Task in hand, which perhaps hath no Undertaker.

An Agent also might be thought upon the residing in *London*, to whom from all Parts, and by whom to all Parts, the Letters should be addreſſed, which must be written to or from the Undertakers, or to and from the Directors; and his charges should be born, and by him the Tasks when they are compleated, should be first sent, and then conveyed unto the Directors carefully that they may not mis-carry.

The Work being effected, the way to impart it unto Forrain Churches, is no more but to get it Translated into Latine, and Printed, after that it is Printed in English, which the Company of Stationers will greedily take in hand, as a Book which will yield great and ready profit: and if there should be any difficulty in the printing of the Latine Copy in these Parts, because our Stationers perhaps will not readily venture upon a Book which will have no great vent here (as it is not likely the Latine Copy will have, when the English is already extant) then meanes may be used towards some Forraine Stationer at *Geneua*, or elsewhere, who will not only Print it, but be induced to contract with the Translatois, to buy the Copy from them, because the Book will sell no leſſe abroad in Latine, than it will do at home in English; that is, exceeding y.

The Copy of a Letter which was written by several Godly
 Ministers, Undertakers in this Work of compiling
 a Body of Practical Divinity, to Doctor ~~after~~ the
 Primate of Armach in Ireland.

Most Reverend Father in God, Grace and Peace, with all due and dutiful Respects premised: If we shall seem bold in apprehending this opportunity of writing by this worthy Knight; yet we are confident that the important cause moving us, will excuse us, and procure not only our pardon, but also its approbation of your incomparable benignity and love to the Churches of Christ. And although it were too great inconsiderateness in us to imagine, that either your vigilant intelligence sitting in that high watch Tower should need our information, or your great faculty, and no less facility, both of Grace and Nature, of Place and Parts to do good, and chiefly to promote the cause of the Gospel, should require Arguments for incitation: yet we thought it our duty at least, to signify our hearty desire for the well-fare of Gods church; and to promise that your care and zeal for it, in the course that we here commend, shall no sooner appear, but it shall find us ready prest to attend it with our best service. It is not unknown unto your Grace, that the Churches of Germany are no less distressed and distractred than then without, the want of inward peace molesting them more, then of outward: Yet as the Ancient Civil Roman State, when often rent by intestine Wars, so sooner was invaded by a Forraine Power, but still the breach was soadred up again: So the wiser taking occasion by these wars in Germany to strike while the Iron is hot, and to make a virtue of necessity, have hoped and so endeavoured to reduce the two grand dissenting parts of these Churches to wished Peace and Unity, while in the fire of furious war, the two spiritual Swords of Luthers and Calvins Party (too keenly bent one against the other) being mollified, might with the more easie hammering be wrought into one, and so become the more strong to fight against the common Adversary. And what do we know, whether the all-disposing wisdom of our God, hath not for this very purpose sent the Sword into those Parts, to launce and asswage the swellings of such Apostumes? Now what hath been already done heretofore, and by whose auspicious setting on foot, and with what successse and greater hopes it still proceedeth (the perfection whereof we dayly pray for) we need not now to relate. That which we here presume to propound, is a work which either may conduce to the begetting of the Child of peace; or being brought forth to the nourishing of it up unto a perfect man in Christ. This work is the framing of a Body of Practical Divinity; for the furnishing of those Churches in special, as being most destitute of it, and very poor in the life and power of Religion. Now for the furtherance of so good and great a work, we who are Ministers of London, whose names are under-written, apprehending the excellent use of such a Work; but withall, the great difficulty of effecting in any good degree, unless some such Noble, Able, and active Instruments as your Grace is, give a good speed unto it: are bold in the bowels of Christ, and in a Brotherly compassion of the same mystical Body, to implore your Piety and wisdom, not only in giving Counsel and Direction, but assistance also by your worthy Example, joining Head, Heart, and Hand together, for the advancement and accomplishment of so Religious and desireable a Work: And the rather are we emboldned to desire the engagement of your Grace herein, sith we are credibly informed, that your Grace formerly hath much

much desired such a Work to be undertaken and effected. And who can better describe a Methode, manner, matter, and means for this then your self, whom the Lord hath so richly furnished with so excellent gifts of Wisdom, Learning, Charity and Zeal, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Ministry, for the Edifying of the Body of Christ.

Thus recommending all this to your Christian Care and Piety, with our humblest services and dayly prayers for the increase of Gods Grace and blessing upon your vigilancy in keeping the flock of God from Ravenous wolves, and advancing the Gospel in the power and purity of it, as well abroad as at home, we humbly take our leave, attending what service your Grace will command us, when once your piety and Prudence hath set us down an Ample and full Platform of the whole Body of Divinity, so as we may be able to discern all the limbs and lineaments of it; and so taking a full view of the entire Model, each may make choice of that piece in special which he findes himself fittest to frame and polish, until by this means the whole Building shall be happily and the more easily finished, many hands making light work.

Your Graces most humble Servants
in the Lord,

*William Gouge
John Stoughton
John Downam
Henry Burton
Geo. Walker
Nicolas Morton*

*Sidr. Simpson
Adoniram Byfield
Rich. Culverwell
Obadiah Sedgwick
Geo. Hughes
Joseph Symonds.*

For his loving Friend
M. John Dury, Tbeze.

MR. Dury, I am glad that you are still willing to take some pains about the procuring of a Body of Practical Divinity; a Work which I have long wished for; and which formerly my heart was in, and my hand would have been in, if God had been pleased to continue our Peace: for when you brought over the Letters from the Forraign Churches, wherein they made it their Request unto us to gratifie their Churches with some Endeavors about the compleiment of this Work: which were seconded by a Letter from the Ministers in and about London unto me, when I was in Ireland many years ago, I was very glad of the Motion, and laid it very seriously to heart, and conferred with some of my Brethren about it, that we might bring the Work to some perfection. Doctor Downam the then Bishop of London-Derry, was a man whose studies were much bent

[492]

that Way : for which cause it was referred to him ; and he readily did undertake the Task to draw up a Model or Plat-form, according to which that Systeme or Body might be compiled, that the Ministers who had written to me might be able to choose their Tasks, and set themselves at work about it.

This Model he promised to send unto me to revise it before it should be imparted to the foresaid Ministers, that in our joint name it might be sent unto them. But he either for want of health, or some other impediments, did not expedite the work before his death, and when the Troubles of Scotland did begin : which by reason of my Lord of Strafford's intermeddling had some Reflexion upon us in Ireland ; and not long after I being come over hither, he the Bishop of Derry being dead, the Troubles of Ireland taking fire, at the proceedings of the then Parliament here, and the great distractions of this and the two Nations increasing ever since, I could not do what was desired of me, and what I heartily desired might have been done, and wish yet may be done ; for it will never be too late or unseasonable to set upon such an Enterprise.

If therefore by your Solicitation and pains you can oblige those that in the Universities, or in and about this City are able and willing to undertake it, I think you will do a work very acceptable to all that are Godly, and profitable to all the Churches at home and abroad. Let me therefore intreat you to proceed, that whilst there is any appearance of doing good to our Generation, we may not neglect the Opportunity.

As for the Model of the Heads which you have shewed unto me ;

First, I shall advise this, that the Precognitions may not be insisted upon largely, but as briefly and substantially as may be ; and if some References be made unto such Authors as handle the Heads of the Precognitions more at large, it may give satisfaction to such as will be more curious and desirous to see things amply handled.

Secondly, my advice is, that the work may be contracted to as few hands as may be ; who may meet and confer together about it when they are perfecting their Tasks.

Thirdly, I would not have the Work too large and Voluminous for several Reasons, yet as full of matter as it can be : and where Enlargement may be thought useful, References may be made to such Authors as use them most effectually.

Lastly, Concerning the Cases of Conscience which should be handled in this Body, I think they may be brought in and inserted under every Head of matter whereunto they belong.

This is for the present that which I would suggest. I pray God direct

direct and assist you and all those that go about it ; And what I shall be able to do towards the encouragement of able Workmen therein, you may be confident shall not be wanting from

Your loving friend

Jas. Armachanus.

From my study,
Decemb. 14. 1653.



A Letter written divers years ago by the Author of the foregoing Treatise, to M. Samuel Hartlib, concerning the difference of Practical and Case Divinity.

To speak of the difficulty you propose concerning Case and Practical Divinity, I do thus conceive of the matter, that if men would not be slack to do what they ought, the difficulties would resolve themselves in the action; yet to satisfy the Scruple, and answer the desire you have, I say thus, That in all Actions Two things are to be considered. First, that which is Essential to it. Secondly, that which is Circumstantial.

The Essential parts of all Actions are two : The proper End for which it ought to be taken in hand, and the means of attaining that End, which is the Formal way of proceeding in going about that which is intended to be done.

These Two, viz. the End and the Means are in all Actions certain and determinate ; But the Circumstantial part of the actions is infinite, according to the variety of Accidental Circumstances.

Now from this division of the parts of all actions, which is so plain and natural that nothing can seem to me more facile, distinct and orderly, we may gather what is to be done in this matter, and what the Methode both of Practical and Case Divinity ought to be, as well in themselves, as the one toward the other. For Practical Divinity containeth properly the determination of the Ends of all our actions, to shew how they are subordinate to Godliness and the Rules whereby the actions are to be directed to their own proper ends.

These Two things so far as they are expressly set down in the Scriptures, ought to be explained in that which we may call the Body of Practical Divinity ((or in the nature of the thing there is no proper distinction between Practical and case Divinity) according to the general Idea which I once conceived and sent to you ; viz. that the First part of Practical Divinity be concerning the Essentials of a Christian state ; the Second concerning the Accidentals as he is a Christian in this or that Calling. We see this is the ordinary Method of the Apostles in all their Epistles : therefore the Practical Directions, should, as in every particular, so in the whole state of a mans life be divided and ordered, that whatsoever is plainly in the Scriptures determined, concerning either the Essential Ends or Means of Christianity, or concerning the Accidental Ends and Means of Christianity in a certain Calling, that should be

fully explained from the Texts wherein it is delivered ; which should be according to the order of the matters contained in them (viz. as they are nearer or further subordinate to the main End of Gods glory and our own Salvation) set down in their several Ranks , whereof as soon as ever I can , I will labour to give you a more full and demonstrative Draught then that which I have heretofore ; so the whole Body of plain Rules and undoubted Truths sufficiently explained in the Ends and Means of all Essential & Accidental parts of a Christian life is to be the matter of that which is properly in a strict sense called here Practical Divinity : and then all the Circumstantial and determinate Accidents which the Scripture hath left to every man's conscience to work upon in the several Occurrences of his life ; wherein the variety of his Circumstances, changes the nature of the action, and makes a man doubtful what to do, or not to do, is to be the matter of that which you call Case-Divinity.

Now who doth not see that these two must be joyned together either in one body of Treatise, or else so, if they be two several Volumes and Treatises, yet in the Method they may be all one , so that the cases must be referred every one to his Action of which he is a Case ; just as in Grammer the Exceptions must needs be referred to the Rules and every Exception to his own Rule : otherwise all is in a confusion ; so it is here : the cases are as it were Exceptions of the General Rule , which therefore must needs be first delivered ; from whence you see that I am not of your minde when you say that Case-Divinity must first be ruled before Practical Divinity ; for Case Divinity cannot be Ruled except you have first a Rule to Rule it by . Now the Rule is that which I say is the matter of Practical Divinity ; viz. all such expresse Determinations as the Scripture doth deliver concerning all the parts and actions, either of the general and substantial , or of the particular and accidental state of Christianity.

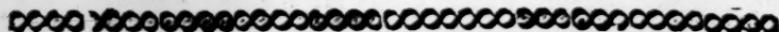
When these expresse determinations are set down in their natural order , then we have a Rule of understanding and conscience by which every man is able to direct himself afterwards in the several Occurrences as his occasions may fall out ; for the spirit of Obedience dwelling in his conscience, and being informed and strengthened by the Rule of the Word , will discern the duty which is most requisite to be performed in the particular occasion wherein a man is ; Neither is it possible as I suppose , that all the incident cases of this nature can be truly determined, so that they will satisfy every mans conscience . For the different measures of knowledge and of the apprehensions of the Rule , make the conscience doubtful ; And therefore except the settled and infallible Rules be first received and proposed , all particular decisions of doubtful cases will become nothing else but a matter of inextricable dispute , by which means instead of a Body of Practical Truths, we shall have a new kind of Polemical Divinity in matters of Practice , because the preposterous course being taken to begin at doubts , before the true Rules be known whereby to frame our life , we shall hardly ever finde the right way . For after that different opinions are once taken up in matters of doubt , we see how hardly they are laid down ; and how that men before they will seem to have erred in the particular determination of the doubt , will sometimes strain the sense of many Principles, as in matters of Theory the Papists do plainly .

Therefore I think that to begin at cases is a preposterous course every way , and to do as you say that these cases should first be sent into all Churches to be allowed of and then published ; I think is dangerous to caule much contradiction, and a great deal more laborious then to make up the chief and more profitable part of the Work :

[51]

Work : which if it be well done , may stand by it self without contradiction or fear of opposition , being clearly the truth both in the Word and in every mans Conscience : And then either when this is done , or whiles it is a doing , if some be set a work to gather Cases as you say out of all M.S. Letters, conferences, correspondences, &c. he ought to referre the Cases to the Heads of the Practical part , so that all the Cases stand in the same order wherein the Infallible Rules of Practical Directions were delivered corresponding in the same matters , as more particularly and as it were Individual Determinations of the same End and Means of an Action , or rather as an application of the Rule delivered to a particular object wherein every body might not hit the right way of proceeding.

F I N I S.



An Extract of a Letter, written by George Horne Doctor
in Divinity, and publick Professor of History
in the University of Leyden;

To Samuel Hartlib. Esq;

I Dea illa Theologie Practica Domini Durai, ita me affectit, ut
vix quicquam à Te hactenus projectum magis. Crede mihi,
nullum Divinius remedium sedandis illis Polemicis inter Prote-
stantes affectibus rixosis, & vera pietati propaganda etiam apud
Atheos & Hareticos convenientius. Nunquam illud ingens Ire-
nicum Opus adoptatum & stabilem finem deducetur, nisi hoc effectio.
Incredibiliter mihi tota Dispositio & Scopus placent: Et quid quo
remore, quo minus Vester Ille Iosua, Smā Authoritate id intra breve
tempus Orbi exhibere possit? Abundat Britannia Viris capacissi-
mis, & ad hunc laborem natis. Longè projecto satius in ejusmodi
Opere occupari curas & manus plurium quam in consarcinandis
Commentariis Scripturarum, quibus jam obrutus est Orbis. &
Ecclesia velut sub onere quodam gemunt. Legam autem & relegam
totum Opus attentiū, & si quid incidat, quod aliquid ad Templi
illis Hierosolymitani structuram conferre possit, studiose annotabo;
quamquam projecto eā in parte Vestrae palmam obtinent, ut id
Opus non aliunde quam ab Anglia exspectare Christianus Orbis pos-
sit. Contulerunt tot pientissime Anima, tot jam annis copiosam
materiam; quid restat, nisi ut Salomo aliquis, evocatis Artifici-
bus, Templum longè illo Ceremoniali magnificentius, exstruat?

In

In English.

M R. Drury his Idea of Practical Divinity, hath pleased me as much as any thing that ever you sent me. Believe me, there is not a more Sovereigne remedy then this, for the Putting an end to the controversies and quarrels now between Protestants; nor fitter for the Propagating of true piety, even amongst Atheists and Hereticks : That great Work of Pacification, will never be brought to the desired end of settlement, but by this means. The whole Order and Scope of this Work do please me exceedingly. And (I pray you) what can hinder, Your *Ysma* from imposing it on the World by his Authority within a short time ? England doth abound with men, that are most fit for this Work, and as it were born to perform it. It were certainly much better, to have the cares and hands of many men employed about such a Work, as this, then in compiling of Commentaries on Scripture, wherewith the world is already overwhelmed, and the Churches groan under them as under a burden. But I will read over this whole Tract more heedfully, and if any thing come into my mind, which may conduce towards the building of this Temple of Jerusalem, I will carefully set it down. Although in this part, your English men do so excell, that the Christian World needs not to have it done by any else ; So many godly Souls having for these many years been preparing abundant matter for it ; What is now to be done, but for some *Solomon* to call his Workmen together, and build up a Temple, far more magnificent, then the Ceremoniall one was ?

The Expedient for a Correspondie with Forrain
Protestants.

THe complaint which the Prophet David made in his low condition, may now be taken up in our dayes by all that favour the dust of Sion, and take pleasure in her stones ; namely that *her bones are scattered at the graves mouth, as one cleaveth wood upon the ground,* Psal. 141.7. for if we look upon the Churches which make Profession of the same saving truth in opposition to Popery as now they are divided and broken ; we shall see them almost, if not altogether, as uselesse one to another as dry bones, scattered up and down, ready to be cast into the grave, or as chippes of wood lying on the ground only fit to be gathered and burnt ; therefore our resolution should be the same which the Prophet took in the words following upon his complaint. *But our eyes are to thee O God the Lord; in thee is our trust, leave not our souls destitute.*

There is none other that can help but he in such a case : Let then our eyes be turned only towards him ; because our expectation will not be in vain, if we flee to him for refuge ; for we have a word of promise giving us assurance that he will help ; for Moses hath said. *That the Lord shall judge his people and repent him for Deut. 32.36. his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left :* and the Prophet Isaia hath declared for our comfort, *Isai. 59.19. that when the enemie shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.* It is evident then, that we have a ground to hope that the Lord in his own time will make our dry bones to stir, and live and joyn together, and being clothed with flesh and skin to stand upon their feet and become a great and mighty army : for there is no condition of the Saints so weak and low, but God can ; and when it is fit, will also raise them out of it : because he hath in a readines means which he hath appointed to that effect ; and when his spirit will breath upon them, to set them a work ; the businels will be accomplished.

Now the means by which the Lord doth execute his wonderful counsel, and by which he will bring to passe his excellent work ; is two fold ; the one is the manifestation of the Truth, by the armour of light ; and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, to discover the hidden things of darknes, and sweeping away the refuge of lies and Hypocrisie to slay the wicked one and confusne the man of sin ; which part of his work is already well advanced in the midst of all these distractions, and divisions of parties : and the other is by the unitie of the Spirit, in the Communion of Saints, to bring the whole Body so to depend upon the head Iesus Christ ; that it shall appear at last fitly joyned together and compacted by that which every joint supplyeth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part to make the encrease of the Body to the edifying of it self in love : and this part of the work although it is very little advanced in appearance, yet there are Preparatives towards it, which are not inconsiderable, if rightly weighed and taken notice of : and whereof in due time a more full account may be given : but for the present we shall

shall only shew some motives for which we should attend unto this part of Gods Counsell, and suggest a way by which we may help forward the effect thereof, and become instrumental towards others in furthering his work.

The Motives which should induce us to mind the design which God hath of uniting his Saints together are so many in the Holy Scriptures, and so clearly set forth, that a Volum might be written thereof if we would be large: but it shall suffice at present only, to point at the places where the Holy Ghost doth urge the duty upon us: if we look upon 1 Cor. 12. The scope of the Apostle is there to demonstrate that all spiritual gifts are bestowed upon the Church Militant on earth, to the end that they may be made use of to profit withhold by the several members of the mystical Body in the unitie thereof: and in chap. 13. the grace of Charitie is said to be so necessary for this effect; that without it none other grace is profitable, either to our selves or towards others; in the fourth of the Epistle to the Ephes. ver. 1. till 17. the Apostle sheweth that no man doth walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith he is called to the Profession of the Gospel, who doth not intend and endeavour by humilitie, meeknes, long suffering and forbearance of others in love to keep the Unitie of the Spirit in the bond of Peace; and whatsoever throughout the Scripture is commanded concerning love (which is the great and new Commandment) and particularly in the 1 Epistle of John, it tendes all to oblige our conscience to this maine duty of seeking the Unitie of the Spirit amongst Saints, and of keeping it in the bond of Peace: and if the Apostles words, Phil. 2.1, 2. be laid to heart, they will convince any man that hath any feeling of his duty in this matter, If, saith he, there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of Love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies; fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind, &c. intimating that without the care of this duty; all the joy and happinels which Saints ought to further in one another, is quite lost and utterly made void; which in these our dayes we find experimentally to be too true, by reason of our divisions and strivings, for which the name of God is blasphemed amongst the adversaries, and the Profession of the truth amongst our selves is dishonoured.

Now to remedy this great evil, and to remove the scandals arising from thence, for which a woe is denounced and in some measure executed against us, the easie way which is suggested is, to set a foot a Religious Correspondencie with Forraine Protestants to carry on a Gospel interest amongst Christians, not by strength or might, but in a Gospel way, by a friendly Correspondencie and concurrence in Counsells; to hold forth unanimously, the matters of Faith and Doctrine wherein we all fully agree, and do own the same laving truths; and to set a foot the Practice of the same Rules of duties by walking therein, to oppole ignorance and profanenes, to banish confusion and disorderlines in worship, and be no more strangers to one anothers condition, but to entertain a mutual Care for each others good and the progres of the Gospel in the world, to which esch & a settled correspondencie upon Religious grounds and Principles; between us and our neighbour Protestants, will be both an easie and in Gods way a powerfull means; which Correspondencie may be thus contrived and brought about; We forthwith intend a systeme or body of Divinity, wherein all the English writings of Practcial Divinity and Cases of Conscience shall be digested in English and Latine, and we intend the entertainment of strangers in a Colledge here, from whence our Learning may be carried forth in most Languages by such Students, and all good works advanced by the same hands, to which we already find great forwardness in this Nation, not only to labourt in the work, but also to

contribute in matter of charge; And of this Work in instituting a Colledge propagandis bonis operibus we shall give Advertisement to our friends as occasion presents; not doubting but since the Lord hath given us in England such a measure of light and Peace, but there will appear a ready heart amongst our Nations for the rowling away the reproach upon us, of having much of faith, and little of Works; and from this Colledge and Trustees about this Work, we shall be ready to maintain such Correspondence with our Brethren beyond the Seas, that they and we may have cause to rejoice, and our enemies to mourn, and this charge of Correspondency fixed upon the Trustees for the Work above said.

The incouragement of this Correspondency intended, riseth much from the unspeakable blessing hath accompanied the Letter and Epistle of the Saints, witness those in the New Testament, what *Luther*, *Calvin*, and others have done that way, and what dayly success therein of Epistoling, there are clouds of witness.

For the present we judge it meet, that what any Forraine Divine hath now to Communicate, might come either to the Vice-Chancelour of the University, or the Ministers sitting at White-hall weekly for approbation of Ministers. And these things we desire may be remembred at home and abroad in the prayers of Gods people, that we may not make forfeiture of our mercies by our sloth and negligence, and sit down by the starving sluggard with *non possem*.

FINIS.

Errata.

IN the names subscribed to the Latin Letter, read *Hopfius*. item *P. T. pastor Schreheimi*. item, *Beilsteinensis & Beilsteinensi*. In the subscription to the English Letter read *Hopfius, & Schreheim & Orzen*.

IN the quotations of Scripture places, pag. 1. read in Margin. 1 *Peter*. pag. 2. in Margin read. *John* 13. *ibid. Jam* 1. 22. pag. 4. lin. 39. read 17. 3. pag. 17. lin. 36. read *Luke* 24. 47. p. 21. l. 35. r. 1 *Cor*. 6. 20. p. 37. l. 11. r. *Isai*. 59. p. 41. l. 37. r. *Dan*. 12. 7.

In the words of the discourse pag. 3. lin. 17. read *manifest myself*. pag. 5. lin. 35. read *Precognitionis* pag. 6. lin. 31. read *main heads*. *ibid. lin. ult.* read. *those* pag. 34. lin. 21. read *Disputations* pag. 36. lin. 26. read *pertaining* pag. 37. lin. 15. read *from my judgement*. pag. 42. lin. 4. read *to one end*. *ibid. lin. 15.* read *rectifie* pag. 44. lin. 35. read *Pannani* pag. 45. lin. 8. read *the forraine* p. 46. l. 26. read *upon, residing*.